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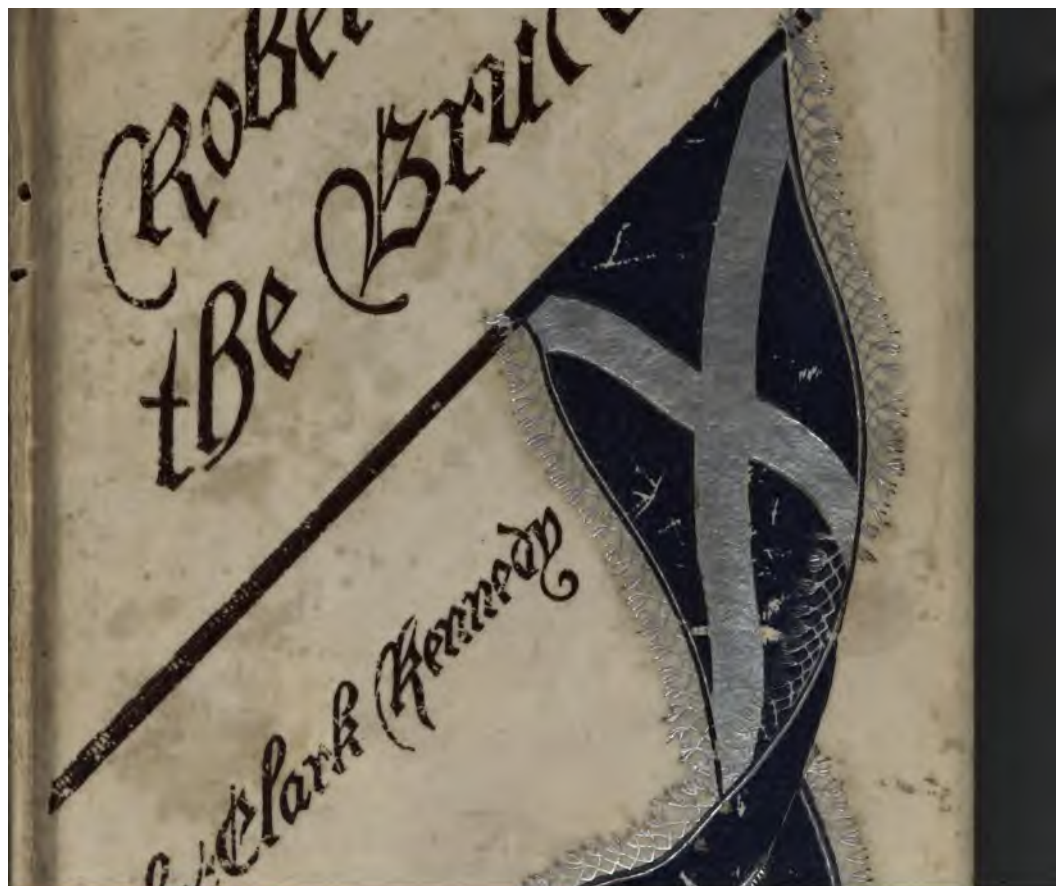
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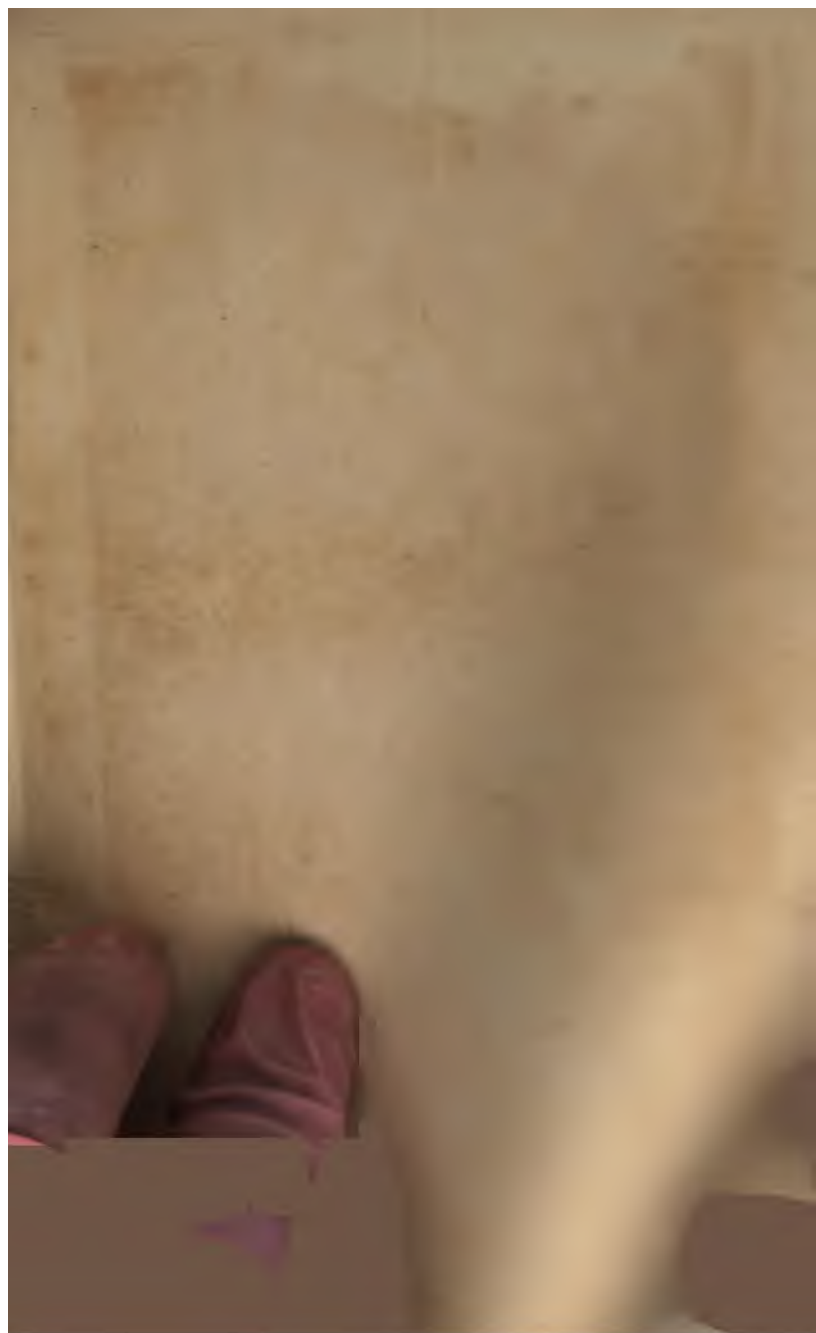
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In memory of
Jack M. Dungan
from a gift by
Mr. Arthur Mann





Oliver Munro
from *Heiding.*
1884.

ROBERT THE BRUCE.



1877



Frontispiece.

“Where smiles old Garlies’ ruined tower.”
Introduction to Canto III.

ROBERT THE BRUCE.

A POEM.

HISTORICAL AND ROMANTIC.

BY

ALEXANDER W. M. CLARK KENNEDY,

LATE CAPTAIN COLDSTREAM GUARDS.

ILLUSTRATED BY JAMES FAIR, JUNR.

"Blest, who has w^t Wallace's blood,
Blest, when Bruce has often led!"
SCOTT.

LONDON :

KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, AND CO.

1, PATERNOSTER SQUARE.

1884.

APA3788



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PREFACE.

It will, I sincerely trust, be believed that it has been only after great doubtings of mind that this poem is offered to the public.

The title explains itself, and I am quite aware that I may be open to the charge of there being but little of a *continuous story* in the poem. Well, I must take my chance, as hundreds have done before ; but I will honestly say that the book was conceived, worked out, and completed merely as a humble tribute to the immortal memory of our glorious patriot Robert the Bruce, from whose life of high principle, self-denial, courage, and endurance, and above all, the nobleness of his private character, the best amongst us may well learn a lesson.

“There is no living man,” says the historian Fordun, “ who is able to narrate the story of those complicated misfortunes which befell him in the

commencement of his war, his frequent perils, his retreats, the care and weariness, the hunger and thirst, the watching and fasting, the cold and nakedness, to which he exposed his person; the exile into which he was driven, the snares and ambushes which he escaped, the seizure, imprisonment, the execution, and utter destruction of his dearest friends and relatives. And if in addition to these almost innumerable and untoward events, which he ever bore with a cheerful and unconquered spirit, any man should undertake to describe his individual conflicts and personal successes, those courageous and single-handed combats, in which, by the favour of God and by his own great strength and courage, he would often penetrate into the thickest of the enemy, now becoming the assailant and cutting down all who opposed him; at another time acting on the defensive, evincing equal talents in escaping what seemed inevitable death; if any writer shall do this, he will prove, if I am not mistaken, that he had no equal in his own time either in knightly prowess, or in strength and vigour of body!" (Fordun and Hearne, vol. v. p. 998.)

Many friends from all parts of Scotland, England, and abroad have taken the greatest interest in the work, which augurs well for the poem; and I must especially thank the Marquis of Ailsa, the Earl of Selkirk, Earl Brownlow, Sir Andrew Agnew, Mr. McKerlie, F.S.A., and other friends, for much kindly assistance; and to Mr. James Faed, junr.,

who has executed the beautiful pictures of some of the most lovely scenes in his native district, with that magic pencil that appears to be the "heirloom" of the Galloway Faeds, I am greatly indebted. And as its scenery lies in one of the most gloriously beautiful districts in all Scotland (though comparatively but little known or visited) and as its *title* is, I am fully aware, the most popular to a Scotchman's ear that could have been chosen,—I am in hopes of the success of the attempt. If I fail, I shall prove only that I have tried to climb too high ; and if, on the other hand, I succeed in this attempt to re-picture some of the gallant deeds of those stirring times, I shall know that such good fortune will be solely due, not to the writer, but to that grand name, at the very mention of which Scottish blood all the world over grows warm, and Scottish hearts beat proudly, and Scottish eyes grow brighter,—the name of our Patriot King !

If Robert the Bruce *had* wanted any incentive to enable him to love his country more, he had but to gaze upon the glorious scenery of Galloway, Ayrshire, and Dumfries, which, if any of my readers have not visited, I can only advise such to go at once, and enjoy a rich treat for eye and mind. I wish to add that the main incidents of the poem are strictly *true*, as will be seen by referring to the notes ; in the compilation of which I have studied—and in many cases read through—more than sixty volumes.

Before closing these few words I feel I must record—sad duty though it be!—the great and kindly interest taken in the production and success of this poem by his late much lamented Royal Highness, the Duke of Albany, one of his last letters being to wish me success! Since the author's first attempts at literature when a boy at Eton, the late Prince,—to whom the little volume of the "Birds of Berks and Bucks" was dedicated, by his own desire—had never ceased to take the kindest possible interest in the work attempted by one of his old boy-playfellows! Alas! that the kindly heart is for ever still, that the smile of welcome will never be seen on earth again, that the cheerful sympathy he was always so ready to offer to all cannot once more be ours! How many of his friends can truly feel of that noble soul,—ever forgetting self, ever striving for the weal of others—

" He is gone on the mountain,
He is lost to the forest,
Like a summer-dried fountain,
When our need was the sorest ! "

Such a Prince as he was can ill be spared to his country! But his good deeds will long survive him; and what more noble monument could a Christian Englishman desire?

ALEXANDER W. M. CLARK KENNEDY.

Knockgray, Galloway, N.B.

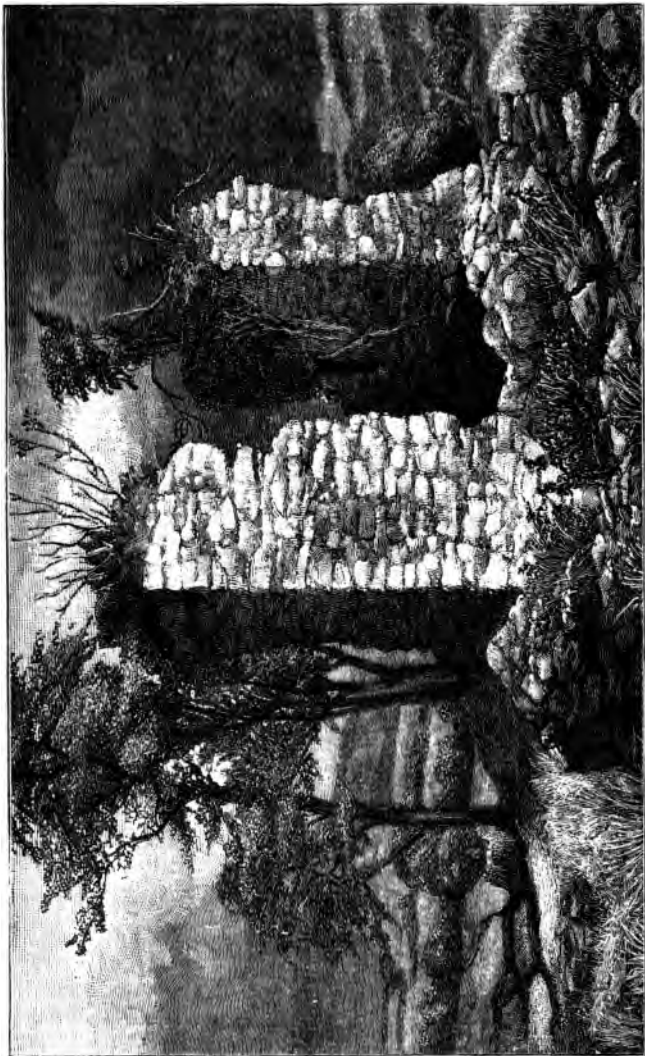
July, 1884.

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Frontispiece.

“Where smiles old Garlies’ ruined tower.”
Introduction to Canto III.

In memory of
HIS LATE LAMENTED
ROYAL HIGHNESS, PRINCE LEOPOLD,
DUKE OF ALBANY, EARL OF CLARENCE, AND
BARON ARKLOW, K.G., K.T., ETC.,
TO WHOM
THIS VOLUME WAS TO HAVE BEEN DEDICATED.

WHEN tinged with gold is Craigangowan's
crest,*
When on Balmoral falls the ling'ring ray,
And nature's world in peace is lull'd to rest,
And shades of eve proclaim the close of day,
Then is the curlew's cry no longer heard
Resounding far across the purple lea,
Then hush'd in sleep is voice of latest bird,
The owl flits noiseless 'neath the forest tree,
And night stands guardian o'er the lovely banks of
Dee.

And when in calm and peace the Castle lies,
And brightly gleams the firelight's cheerful ray,

* Craig-an-gowan is the beautifully-wooded, wild mountain, at the foot of which Balmoral lies.

'Tis then I would that some may cast their eyes
Upon the pages of my warrior lay.
Perchance it happen, as I trust may be,
Proud Scottish memories 'round their hearts
shall cling,
When deeds are told that made our nation free ;
And shall not Northern voices fondly sing
The praises of the Bruce, our country's patriot King ?

But one there *was*, alas ! no longer here,
Who loved of great and noble deeds to sing,
And all those traits a good man holds so dear—
Himself of nobleness the very spring !
Yet, as that gentle spirit pass'd away
His blameless life a grand example stood !
And till our glorious England's latest day
A nation's love shall cling, as meet it should,
Around the honour'd name of Leopold the Good.

CANTO I.

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO I.

DEDICATED TO
THE COUNTESS OF DALKEITH.*

ALL hail ! my lords and ladies gay,
Fair damsels, place your work away ;
Your leisure take, my lords, I pray,
And hearken to a martial lay !
Though sung by minstrel all untaught,
I crave your patience, as I ought ;
And grant me grace and give me time,
So, haply, I may suit my rhyme
To each brave knight and lady's ear,
Who loves of warrior deeds to hear.
I'll feats of ancient valour trace,
Give names of ancient fame a place ;
And may ye, as ye turn your glance
Athwart the fields of old romance,
Pause at my tale of Celtic strife,
When cheap was held each warrior's life.

* Now Duchess of Buccleuch and Queensberry.

The bard shall sing of knights of old,
And many a legend rare unfold ;
Of haughty deeds of arms shall tell,
And how the conquering gallants fell,
Or how their vessels stemm'd the tide,
And terror spread both far and wide,
And how, in days of Scotland's fame,
The Southron quaked at Bruce's name.
His theme is love where ladies dwell—
For minstrels know of love the spell ;
And loves the bard to find that art
Of his can stir a maiden's heart :
To mark the bosom rise and fall
More quickly at the harper's call.
And when he sings to dame or maid,
His feeble efforts well repaid
Shall be, if he may haply trace
The crimson o'er the lovely face,
May note the colour come and go,
As turns his lay from joy to woe,
Until he dreams, through bodice thin,
He sees the beating heart within.

Fair ladies, at thy kind command
My harp shall feel its master's hand ;
An', if I have my way and will,
Your gentle hearts shall wildly thrill
At tales of knightly valour told,
As Scotland thrill'd in days of old ;
And fain would I your bosoms move,

And fill them full of patriot love ;
Yet let me ask you, ladies gay,
Ere is commenced my longer lay—
Can Scotland's soil again produce
A patriot staunch as Robert Bruce ?

Nor shall the minstrel's art be vain,
Should times of danger fall again ;
And if our children, yet unborn,
Like him should love the hunter's horn,
And love, like him, our mountains hoar,
Where wander'd once the savage boar,
And love the foaming torrent's roar,
And love to roam the ocean shore,
And hail with joy each lovely dell
Where grows in pride the heather bell,
And fresh and lasting pleasure take
From river, mountain, glen and lake ;
And, if his songs of love or raid
Can move the breast of gentle maid,
If wreaths of bay fair dames shall twine,
As damsels did in olden time—
A tribute fit for knight and squire,
Who fought for love and not for hire,
Who rode for Scotland's name and pride,
For her they bled, for her they died !

And if your sons in future time
Should stumble on my humble rhyme,
And when they hear the battle rage

Should think upon mine ancient page,
And listen to these olden lays
That tell of Scotland's stormy days,
Proud were the bard, and fill'd with joys—
If verse of his can charm the boys,
Could send the colour mantling high,
Could nerve the arm and fire the eye,
Could point the way to deeds of fame,
Add lustre fresh to Scotland's name,
And prompt to valour yet to be,
And future feats of chivalry!
But sooth, 'tis time to end my say,
And to commence the warrior's lay.

E'en should I search our Scotland o'er,
Her western to her eastern shore,
From John o' Groat's and Pentland sea,
To where the Tweed is flowing free,
I could not, gentle lady, find
A name more suited to my mind,
Or fitter for the theme than thine
Wherewith to grace my martial line.
For, when that fatal deed was wrought,
When Bruce in flight his safety sought,
When English Edward's wrath was high,
And Papal thunders rent the sky,
When Comyn's blood was running red (B),
And Royal Bruce from vengeance sped—
Where found he first secure retreat,
Where laid he first in slumber sweet

His wearied body, spent with toil,
But on Drumlanrig's friendly soil ?
And did not Tynron's woods provide
Asylum meet wherein to hide ?
And did not Bruce's spirit dream,
Fair Nith, beside thy winding stream ?—
Could fairer friend the minstrel see
As patron for his lay than thee ?

But would had been the happier lot
Of these old times—well nigh forgot,
And those fair scenes I fain must try
To paint in fancy, 'fore your eye—
To be portray'd by vanish'd hand
Of one who's gain'd the silent land ;
Whose roving footsteps here have trod ;
Who loved our Scotland's heathy sod.
My Galloway, 'twere well for thee
Had happ'd what now may never be—
Oh ! could from that far distant shore
Our loved Sir Walter wend once more,
How deftly would that honour'd hand
Paint all thy gems, my native land !
Would ~~he~~ had heard thy torrents roar,
Had wander'd 'mong thy mountains hoar ;
Had oft'ner trod thy verdant plains,
Had felt the charm thy beauty claims,
Had gazed upon those purple hills,
Had linger'd by thy trickling rills,
Had thought upon thy former ills,

B

Till, all his patriot feelings loose,
He praised the mountain home of Bruce,
And pictured forth each famous spot
With master pen ! Immortal Scott !

CANTO I.

STANZA I.

It was an eve in fair July,
Soft o'er the hill the breezes sigh
A requiem for departing light,
A welcome for approaching night.
All nature's face was bright and gay,
So sweet had been that summer's day.
Still all aglow is yonder sky
That points the roving stranger's eye
Where sank the sun in peace to rest
In gold and crimson in the west.
How swift away the daylight flies !
The weary traveller homeward hies,
The eagle seeks the mountain crest,
The falcon hurries to his nest,
The deer have sought the forest shade,
And owls flit noiseless down the glade.
The mallard's quack is heard on high,
The heron's screech alarms the sky,
As wing they on their rapid flight
To some far lake to pass the night.

How fast the shadows fall around,
And gather o'er the rocky ground,
As darkness casts her dusky veil
On lake and river, hill and dale.

II.

But soon a gentler, fairer ray
Shall chase the gathering gloom away.
The clouds disperse on every side,
And stars are twinkling far and wide ;
The summer moon, in silver dight,
Is softly shining full and bright
Upon the crest of Curleywee,
And on the bosom of Loch Dee (A).
On rugged Craigencallie's height
Plays 'mongst the rocks the fitful light
On many an ancient forest tree,
And on the slopes of high Craiglee.
On grim Cairngarroch's summit grey
The moonbeams dance in merry play ;
Where loves the prowling wolf to roam,
And where the eagle makes its home,
And where those mighty granite rocks
Are refuge for the mountain fox,
And where the "brock"* at peace may dwell
As doth the buzzard on Craignell.
For bird and beast must surely be
A paradise by wild Loch Dee (B).

* The badger.

III.

Though every bird had sought its nest
And every beast had gone to rest
Though each gay flower its petals closed
And the glistening lake in peace reposed,
Though nature's face was calm and still,
And the evening air was damp and chill,
Though silence reign'd on the lonely hill—
Yet it was not silence all around ;
And is it a goblin or mortal sound
 That falls on the listening ear ?
That the wind wafts over the waters bright,
And startles the sleeper whose dreams are light,
 And who can be wandering here ?
For, beyond the shore of the slumbering lake,
And from out yon forest of briar and brake
Ring peals of laughter and voices gay,
Till echo replies mid the boulders grey,
And the laughter is borne on the breeze away.
And are those figures of mortal birth
Who boldly walk o'er the slumbering earth,
And are they warriors armed for war ?
Or goblin spirits from Lochricarr (c) ?
And what is their quest in the forest so free,
And for whom do they seek by the banks of the Dee ?
But the moon shone down on those figures tall
 Where a cliff loom'd grimly high,
And their shadows threw on its rocky wall
 As they swiftly pass'd it by ;

And those ghostly shadows a secret told,
"Twere plain in truth to see——
They were neither goblins nor warriors bold,
But simply maidens three.
But why have they quitted their far-away home,
And whither away do those damsels roam?
When elves are abroad and bad spirits have power,
Why wander they here at this evening hour?
For a maid must be hardy and fearless and bold
Who travels by moonlight alone on the wold.

IV.

Those ladies fair, at the dawn of day,
Were many and many a mile away;
They come from a wild and a distant shore,
But now their journey is well nigh o'er:
And now their labour is well nigh done,
And the goal that they seek for is nearly won.
They have waded many a stream across,
And have traversed many a yielding moss,
Where the beautiful sundew grows humbly around,
Luxuriant over the treacherous ground;
And the eye of the traveller may readily know
That plant which creeps so fair and low,
For however hot be the summer's day,
How fierce soe'er be the noontide's ray,
What though the blistering sun may scorch
All nature bare with his flaming torch,
Though the drooping flowers be bending low,

Though every blade may his fierceness show ?
A pearly drop of dew shall still (D)
The bosom of the sundew fill.

V.

They have look'd on the beautiful chasm of Ness (E),
Where gambols the Doon in its bonnie caress ;
And they quitted the glen when the glistening dew
The bracken had cover'd with beauty anew ;
They have traversed the forest of Buchan through,
They have come from Loch Doon, and its waters
blue (F) ;
From the isle where the osprey has chosen a home ;
From those beautiful woods where the roe-deer roam,
Where the black-cock basks by the sunny shore,
And the sea-gulls hover the wavelets o'er.
They have held their way by the Gala's stream,
And startled the deer from his noonday dream :
They have driven the fox from his mountainous lair,
They have broken the rest of the slumbering hare,
They have look'd on the grouse as he swiftly flew
past
Pursued by the peregrine following fast,
They have gazed on the eagle when circling on high,
And he seem'd but a speck in the ocean of sky
When he wing'd to his home on the Carlin's grey
cairn (G),
To the nest where he carried the warrior's bairn,
That he stole from its cradle one midsummer noon

As it lay 'neath the walls of the Castle of Doon (H),
But the mother climb'd up, and the eaglets were
 slain,
And she won back her darling uninjured again.

VI.

They have sped o'er the heather so bonnie and free,
They have rested 'neath many a glorious tree,
They have look'd on the Millfore all dreary and
 cold (I),
And the dark Craig of Dee so fantastic and bold.
In wildness and grandeur each mountain was dress'd,
And the raven croak'd loudly on Corserine's breast,
And the scream of the curlew was eerie and shrill.
But the locks of the Dungeon lay dreary and still ;
And, save for the track of the wandering boar,
Of life not a trace by their desolate shore,
Where the Dungeon of Buchan its summit uprears (J),
And the Merrick, gigantic, in glory appears.
And their footsteps to-day have been wandering far,
From the braes of Craigmulloch to grim Mull-
 wharchar,
To grey Millyea with its rampart of rocks (K),
The home of the badger, the wolf, and the fox.
And far have they stray'd by the Cooran's dark bank,
Through desolate marshes where rushes are rank ;
But those maidens, though weary, have won to
 Craiglee,
And now they may rest by the shores of Loch Dee.

VII.

The moon shone down on those maidens three
As they sat by the stem of an ancient tree,
And oh what a picture of beauty rare
They made as they silently rested there !
For each was fair and in tartans dress'd,
But one was more lovely than all the rest,
And meeter for palace than mountainous wild,
But a maiden of impulse she was from a child,
Who loved by the glen and the river to roam,
And call'd the wild mountains her joy and her home.

Oh ! fair she was for the eye to see,
As fitted a damsel of high degree.
For her gentle birth you may quickly trace
In her open brow and her lovely face,
The tiny hand, the little feet,
The ear so small, but white and neat,
The parting lips as rubies red,
The slender neck and the noble head,
And ruddy cheek and raven hair
Combined to make her doubly fair.
Her lissom waist was passing small,
Her gently sloping figure tall,
Her step was light as mountain deer
Her voice fell sweetly on the ear,
And something in her deep blue eye
And something in her lightest sigh
Impression to a stranger gave
That she was gentle, good, and brave,

And under every girlish art
She kept concealed a loving heart.

VIII.

Such maids as this—if Heaven sent,
By Heaven's God were surely meant
To aid their fellows here below,
And strive to lessen pain and woe ;
To stand beside the dying bed,
To smooth the sufferer's fever'd head,
To cheer the widow's deep distress
With that sweet look of tenderness ;
To take the orphans by the hand,
And tell them of a better land,
And teach them how to fight the foe
As through this dreary world they go ;
And tell the weak to pray to Him
Who cheers the road when eyes are dim ;
How bravely they must toil and wait
If they would gain the golden gate ;
And beat the powers of darkness down,
If they would win a golden crown.
Such one as this, our peerless maid,
Though all in homely garb array'd,
More maid, more angel, who may say,
And yet so lovely, young, and gay ?

IX.

Rest they awhile beside the oak
That guards them with its leafy cloak
Of branches spread aloft.
But soon the loveliest maiden spoke,
And the sweet silence gently broke
In accents low and soft.
“ Haste, Mary, haste to yonder brae
That overlooks the little bay,
And, Mary, see thou quickly find
The shallop for our use design’d,
Close hid amongst the heather’s bloom
It rests as in a purple tomb ;
And bracken, with its mantle green,
Hath o’er it spread its leafy screen.
Let Agnes seek the paddles three
Concealed beneath the Druid’s tree (L),
And quickly launch our vessel gay,
And let us o’er the waves away.
The hour was ten that Gilbert gave
For the royal feast in Bruce’s cave.
’Twould ill become us here to stay,
So hasten, maidens, haste away.”
With willing hands and quiet skill
They haste to do their lady’s will,
For well they love their mistress dear,
And they have served her many a year.
The paddles soon fair Agnes finds,
And Mary next the rope unbinds

That holds the shallop to a stake
Amongst the heath that skirts the lake.
They turn the little vessel o'er,
And drag her gaily to the shore,
And now the light and graceful boat
Doth bravely on the waters float ;
And then that crew of maidens three
Went speeding o'er the waves of Dee.

x.

A gently sighing zephyr's breath
Came softly o'er the purple heath,
Came soft across the rippling lake,
And followed in the shallop's wake,
As speeds the boat upon her way
Toward the small sequester'd bay,
 Upon the eastern shore.
And mann'd by such a fairy crew
The bark as if enchanted flew,
And seem'd to cleave the waters through
With proud delight, as if she knew
 What lovely freight she bore.
As one fair maid their course doth guide
With paddle o'er the shallop's side,
The second plies with ready hand
The oars to speed them to the land.
The Lady in the bow reclines,
And heather 'mid her hair entwines.
That duty o'er, to cheer their way,

She next her harp prepares to play :
And soon each chord melodious rings
Responsive to the air she sings.

XI.

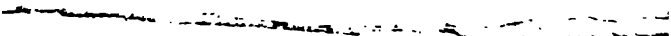
Song.

Row, maidens, row ;
And deftly ply the oar
'Neath the waters so bright
In the merry moonlight
Till we win to the eastern shore.

Merrily, merrily row,
For our bark is stout and strong,
'Tis made from a mighty pine that stood
In ancient Buchan's fairy wood
Full many a year and long.

Then row, sisters, row,
And swiftly the boat shall fly,
As our way we take
O'er the bonnie lake,
Beneath the starlit sky.

Then row, maidens mine
And cleave we the dancing wave,
For the feast is spread
And the wine runs red
In the royal Bruce's cave.



XII.

Song (continued.)

Merrily maidens row,
And urge our boat along
While the harp's gay sound
Is echoing round
In the chorus of the song.

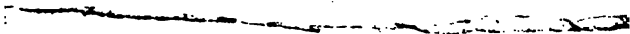
Then merrily maidens row,
Let us haste to the trysting cave,
For the minstrel's art
Shall cheer the heart
Of Bruce and his followers brave.

Oh speed the bonnie bark,
Nor let our voyage be long,
We will cheer, as of old,
Those warriors bold,
With Scotland's patriot song !

Maidens, cease your toil,
For the bark hath reach'd the strand,
Our shallop moor
To the rocky shore
And lightly spring to land !

XIII.


The song had ceased, but still the strain
Came floating o'er the waves again,
And echoed round the lovely bay,
Then died upon the breeze away.
The maidens quickly gain the shore,
Each hides amongst the heath her oar,
And then pursues the rocky road
That leads to Bruce's wild abode.
Amidst the boulders scatter'd round
No pathway had those damsels found,
But so familiar was the way
They oft had trod in glare of day ;
And as they breast the rugged hill
They hear a sudden sound and shrill ;
It is a blast of bugle horn
Across the sleeping mountain borne ;
And ere the notes have died away
A figure clad in tartans gay
Is swiftly hast'ning down the brae.
With joy he greets those ladies fair,
Who gladly yield them to his care
And as they climb the rocky height
The merry jest and laughter light
And maiden song are echoing round,
And hill and glen repeat the sound,
While converse gay the road beguiles.
Their youthful faces beam with smiles,
For each admires their warrior guide,



Well fitted to that solitude
Which reign'd around the cavern hoar,
Where lately dwelt the savage boar,
Where slumbering bats had loved to rest,
And where the owl had made her nest ;
But now it serves a nobler use,
And shelter gives to gallant Bruce.

XVI.

If lonely traveller here should roam
And glance within this rustic home,
He sure would say—if guess he gave—
That this were mountain robbers' cave,
And yon the robber's numerous band,
And pray for mercy at their hand.
The cavern walls from roof to ground
With warlike spoils were hung around,
While here and there in vacant space
Were trophies of the merry chase.
There, high above the royal head,
Saint Andrew's banner gay is spread,
Its silver cross athwart the roof,
Of Bruce's patriot love a proof.
And keen and bright and sharp'd for use,
The mighty sword of Robert Bruce
Beside his massive axe was hung,
That many a valiant deed had done ;
And various weapons rest beneath,
And many a brand and many a sheath,



While bills and spears are ranged around,
Or lie neglected on the ground ;
And flaming torches lend their light
To make the banquet gay and bright.
The ruddy firelight's ray doth dance
Upon each warrior's naked lance,
And lengthy bows of ash or yew,
In Caldon's woods that lately grew (o),
Are piled in bundles near the door,
Whilst sheaves of arrows deck the floor ;
And yonder ancient huntsman's horn
Hath oft been heard at early dawn
In Buchan's glades, when Edward gay
Had brought the wearied stag to bay.
Full many a head with antlers wide
Are ranged around, and side by side
With skull of boar and mask of fox
Conceal each crevice of the rocks.
Beside the grizzled badger's coat
Is shaggy skin of mountain goat,
And heads of wolves, of elk and roe,
Of gallant stag, or gentle doe,
Are hung suspended from the wall,
And deck that wild fantastic hall.

XVII.

Two mighty fires are blazing high,
And massive logs upon them lie,
On either side the royal cave,

Whose roof a common opening gave
As exit for the curling smoke
That rises from those logs of oak.
And shaggy hounds of southern breed,
So keen of scent but slow of speed,
Around the blaze their vigil keep,
Or stretch their limbs in happy sleep,
And urge the woodland chase again,
Or hunt their quarry o'er the plain ;
While gather'd round the cheerful blaze
The warriors tell of ancient days,
How many a glorious feat was done,
How many a bloody field was won ;
While comrades love or liquor praise,
Or join the maidens in their lays,
Some by the rocky walls are resting,
And some are laughing, some are jesting.

XVIII.

But when the monarch lifts his hand
Obedient is that warrior band,
And all is hush'd within the cave,
As summon'd Bruce a favourite slave (P),
Who hurries, at the royal call,
From out a little inner hall
You scarce would notice, for the wall
Appear'd unbroken there.
But if you would the spot explore,
Yon shaggy skins that hide the door,

And drape the narrow entrance o'er,
And half conceal the rocky floor,
 You need remove with care.
Then gazing in your curious eye
The Bruce's larder would espy ;
There hang on high two forest deer
All ready for the morrow's cheer.
And twenty salmon from the Cree,
(With silver painted in the sea,)
Upon some rushes damp appear,
Ta'en yesternight with torch and spear.
A mighty boar bereft of hide
Suspended swings, and side by side
Are moor-fowl slain by Edward Bruce,
Who knew of various traps the use.
In order due and ranged around
Are countless cobwebb'd barrels found,
A goodly store of liquor old,
To cheer the heart of warriors bold.

XIX.

Two squires beside their master stand ;
Each holds a mazer * in his hand ;
When gives the Bruce a wonted sign,
Each goblet brims with ruby wine.
Then every warrior rises up
And lifts on high the festive cup,
And quaff they all with loud acclaim
A health to Lady Alice Graem :

* A large drinking-cup, with a cover.

And once again the echoes ring,
When Lady Alice toasts the King.
And now with merry jest and song,
And peals of laughter loud and long,
With ancient tale and roundelay
They speed the festive hours away,
And many a fearful legend old
In turns those bearded soldiers told.
And Alice, as was oft her use,
Held converse gay with Robert Bruce.
But soon requests the courteous king
That Lady Alice Graem shall sing.
Her harp a maiden quickly brought,
For Alice was by nature taught
Before her childhood pass'd away,
With magic hand her lyre to play,
And loves the maid to feel that art
Of hers can charm the monarch's heart.

xx.

For who like Alice Graem can sing,
And who such depth of feeling bring
From out the harp's melodious string?
And who like Alice Graem can move
Each listener's heart to think of love?
Can cheat the sense until around
All seems to them enchanted ground?
And who like her can lull to rest
And calm each warrior's troubled breast,

Can picture forth each happy home,
For better days must surely come
When Bruce hath conquer'd all his foes,
And Scotland may at peace repose ;
How each shall live a quiet life,
And, soothed by love of child and wife,
How sweetly may the warrior dwell
In some sequester'd highland dell ;
And, all his former trials forgot,
Enjoy till death his happy lot ?

XXI.

Or who their souls can better move
And fill them full of patriot love ?
As tells her lay of deeds of old,
When Scotia's sons were brave and bold,
As when they drove the pirate Dane (Q)
Defeated to his shores again ;
Or how, when sail'd the Northmen o'er,
And thought to land on Scottish shore,
They sank their galleys 'neath the wave,
And gave the foe a watery grave.
She sings of deeds of valour done,
And how a name their fathers won !
There is a lay that wakes her lyre
Of which her listeners never tire.
It is a sad though glorious theme,
That tells a Scottish patriot's dream,
And how he strove his land to free,

But then, alas! 'twas not to be !
And when the harp vibrating rings
As Lady Alice sweetly sings,
She gives a known and welcome sign,
And as those warriors there recline
In easy postures on the ground
Attentive silence reigns around.

XXII.

She sings of feats of valour done
By Wallace, Scotland's patriot son.
Now hearken all those soldiers bold
To hear a tale she oft had told
Of how the glorious Wallace won
The ancient fort of Cruggleton (R),
That high upon its rugged rock
Had long withstood the battle shock ;
How Steven and McKerlie brave,
With Wallace hid beside the wave,
And how in yonder wooded glen
The leader placed his valiant men,
Where safely may they watch and wait
Until his hand unbars the gate ;
And how, conceal'd upon the shore,
They pass'd the day in silence o'er.
And how they watch'd until the sun
His course that summer day had run,
Till from Cairnharrow's crest the ray
Reflected floats o'er Wigtown Bay,

And bathes with floods of crimson light
The Isles of Fleet so fair and bright,
Till far beyond the Manxman's Isle *
Which lately bask'd in sunny smile,
And far beyond the Burrowhead
Hath sunk the sun in gold and red.
The seagull winging toward the shore
Proclaims that daylight's reign is o'er,
The gloom of night around is cast,
And evening's dusky shadows fast
Are gathering o'er the murmuring sea,
And all the sunshine's beauties flee.
Old Nature's face is fair and calm,
On yonder walls no thought of harm,
Or fear, the English warder knows,
As sinks the Castle to repose :
And all around is hush'd in sleep,
Save for the murmurs of the deep.

XXIII.

The bell on fair Saint Ninian's tower
Had scarcely chimed the midnight hour
When softly swam those heroes three
Across the intervening sea,
And unobserved the rock they climb
All fragrant with the purple thyme,
Until the Castle wall they win,

* The Isle of Man is about twenty miles distant from
Cruggleton.

And gently clamber down within,
And silent through the court-yard creep,
And 'neath the wall in shadow keep,
And seize the warder half asleep.
Sole guardian of the massive gate,
That sentinel hath met his fate,
For Wallace in his iron grasp
Hath gripp'd the soldier hard and fast,
And hurl'd his body o'er the wall:
Ye heavens ! what a fearful fall !
Now Wallace winds a merry blast,
While brave McKerlie, hast'ning fast,
To Steven for assistance calls,
And down the mighty drawbridge falls ;
And in their gallant followers pour,
For Wallace hath unbarr'd the door,
And every point of vantage take
Before the foe are scarce awake.

XXIV.

And now a loud and madd'ning din
Pervades the Castle yard within.
The arrows fly like winter hail,
But useless prove on coats of mail,
While mighty Wallace wields around
His sword, and fells the foe to ground,
And grim McKerlie forward strains
Until the inner yard he gains.
And still the Scotsmen onward dash,

And still their weapons loudly clash,
And darkness, with her sable screen,
Lends terror to the awful scene.
The mighty axes dealing death
Deprive the foe of life and breath.
All bathed in blood is every dirk,
And sword and bill do ghastly work,
Till corpses cumber up the ground,
And gore is streaming all around.
And many a soldier's dying groans,
And many a wounded warrior's moans
Proclaim that life ebbs fast away,
And soon those forms are senseless clay.
But Wallace 'midst the bloody rout
Upraises high his battle shout,
"The foe, the foe is failing fast,
Charge home again, they may not last!"
And penn'd like sheep above, below,
Down, down the brave defenders go!
And then a mighty shout on high
Brings echoes from the midnight sky,
For now is waged this bloody fray,
Victorious Wallace gains the day.
All, all is o'er, the feat is done,
Right bravely is the Castle won!

xxv.

The song is o'er, and murmurs low
Of praise are heard, and louder grow

The shouts as Alice turns to go,
Such is her magic art.
For well those bearded warriors know
There lies beneath that breast of snow
A true and patriot heart.

I ween that every soldier brave
Now standing round the Bruce's cave
Would freely shed his honest blood,
Or gladly pass through fire and flood
For one so fair and young.

And as she waves her last adieus
Each trembling chord the song renews,
As if the harp were loth to lose
An air so sweetly sung.

The vaulted cavern sends again
In echoes back the lovely strain,
Which dies upon the stilly night
As Alice passes from their sight,
And swiftly wends her silent way,
With both her maidens, fair and gay,
To yon secure but lesser cave,
That looks on Dee's romantic wave.
Though small within, there yet is space
For gallant trophies of the chase,
And many a hide is on the wall,
And antlers deck the tiny hall,
And skins of roe are spread beneath
Their couches form'd of purple heath.
A highland maiden, standing by,
Will all their simple wants supply.

A sentinel keeps watch before
The mighty rock that forms the door.
Then in this safe, though rude retreat,
We wish each lady slumber sweet.

XXVI.

But still within the royal cave
Reigns mirth among those warriors brave,
And all around the cavern rung
The laughter loud of old and young,
And rougher jest and ruder song
The echoes of the cave prolong.
And still they fill the empty glass,
And drink a health to wife or lass,
And still they quaff the ruby wine,
Or loudly praise the southern vine.
For sail'd not yonder gallant store
Of liquor old the ocean o'er?
And soon the soldiers round prevail
On Alan Stewart to tell the tale.
That warrior grey at length complies,
And nods his head and rubs his eyes,
Takes next a draught both deep and long,
And then trolls out his simple song.

XXVII.

Alan's Song.


"On a lovely day in the month of May
We stood on the Carrick shore,
And the ocean lay so calm and gay,
For her summer dress she wore.

A mighty galleon stout and strong
Sail'd past on the waters wide,
And o'er the main the flag of Spain
Was borne along in pride.

But the winds they blew, and that galleon flew
Before the favouring gale,
I ween that never a braver crew
Had spread or furl'd a sail.

Oh, happy and gay as she sail'd away
Were the crew, but all in vain ;
For never more shall they see the shore
That bounds the land of Spain.

Then the sunny sky grew dark on high,
And loudly shriek'd the gale,
And a cruel blast dash'd howling past,
And split their only sail.



Then the lightning flash'd, the thunder crash'd,
They could not win the Clyde :
And blast on blast came following fast,
And laid her on her side.

XXVIII.

Song (continued).

Her timbers creak'd, the tempest shriek'd,
But the gallant, noble crew
Cut clear the mast, and she righted fast,
And fought for life anew.

But we saw her still at the tempest's will
Float on before the blast,
All useless now was human skill
When Ailsa's rock was pass'd.

For pour'd the sea o'er the vessel's lea,
Then came a deafening shock,
And aid was vain, for sheer in twain
She split on a mighty rock.

As sank the brave beneath the wave,
Their life of toil was o'er,
And the breakers grey have cast their prey
High up on the Carrick shore.


And o'er and o'er we search'd that shore,
When morning's sun did shine,

But all we found were corpses drowned
And these kegs of ruby wine.

Then hush the laugh the while we quaff
In silence those mariners brave,
Where they peacefully sleep 'neath the ocean deep,
While over them mourns the wave."

XXIX.

When Alan ceased the sadden'd lay,
His hearers softly stole away,
And one by one from the table rose
To seek their couches and court repose.
For the hour of midnight had long gone by,
And weary was many a warrior's eye.
The torches were dim and were flickering low,
And the smouldering fire shed a ruddier glow
Of eerie light on those warriors brave
Who slumbering lay round the Bruce's cave.
For a hundred patriots lay on the ground,
Or resting, were peacefully sleeping around ;
A hundred deerskins, soft and tann'd,
Couches gave to that warrior band ;
And a hundred bunches of heather red
Pillows made for each warrior's head ;
A hundred breasts were beating true,
And though in sleep they rest,
That gallant band, in numbers few,
Are all in their armour drest.



And every man beside his hand
Had placed his axe and his trusty brand ;
Each soldier's helmet of burnish'd steel
Was beside his head or beside his heel.
The coat of mail on each breast shone bright
As danced on their armour the torches' light ;
So if in the darkness the foe should appear,
They will readily meet with a welcome here.
The sentinel paces beside the door,
And scans the valley and mountains o'er,
And looks on the lake with its glistening shore.
But all is at peace on the desolate hill,
He hears but the sound of a murmuring rill,
All else beside is calm and still.

XXX.

Now glanced around, as was his use,
With eagle eye the gallant Bruce,
Before he laid his Royal head
Upon his simple heather bed.
He look'd on the soldiers with glances mild,
As a mother would bend on her slumbering child.
For he loved those warriors, rude and grim,
For had they not risked their all for him ?
He shared their pleasures, he shared their toil,
And bade them fight on for the love of the soil ;
And to lighten their spirits he swore they should see
A glorious day and the patriot free.
He was first to wake and last to sleep,
And the best to laugh and the worst to weep,

And his share of the vigil the Bruce would keep.
What wonder then that they loved the King ?
What wonder through Scotland his praise should
ring ?

For whether good betide or ill,
His soldiers brave were his children still.
And now as he look'd on the slumbering band,
The patriot monarch uplifted his hand
To Heaven, and swore by the beautiful sky,
And that glorious world of the stars on high,
" They ne'er shall sheathe the patriot's sword
Till England bow to the Bruce's word,
Till Brucean banners are waving high
O'er Scotland wide on the northern sky !
Until that glorious day we see—
Our subjects loyal and Scotland free—
Shall be heard the din of the patriot's fight,
Till Scotland's monarch regains his right ! "

XXXI.

Thus spoke the Bruce, and then again
He strives to sleep, but strives in vain :
Thought follows thought across his brain,
And gentle sleep defies.
He now adopts a simple plan,
And beckons to a highlandman,
Who chants a brave and martial lay
To chase the wakeful god away,
And close his aching eyes.

And as the measure rose and fell
King Robert loved its cadence well ;
But ere the wild refrain is o'er
His waking senses wake no more ;
But in his slumber soft and deep
May angels round our monarch keep.

XXXII.

SONG.

Bruce's Rallying Call.

Oh ! are there not hearts in our own bonnie land
As the stars in their numbers as countless as sand,
Who live but to strike and their country to free ?
And they who would fight, let them conquer with me !

For our foes shall be driven from Scotia's land,
Like dogs they shall die on the Cumberland strand,
And the waves of the Solway shall crimson with blood,
For thousands shall drown 'neath her merciless
flood (s).

Like the fox from the hound they in terror shall fly,
Like the lamb in the grasp of the wolf they shall die ;
And many a corpse shall lie bloody and stark
By the shores of the Esk, on the braes of the Sark (r).

And the bells of Carlisle shall be mournfully rung,
Full many a mass shall in England be sung,

And many a maiden and many a bride
Shall summon her lover no more to her side.

For Englishmen's corpses shall cumber the plain,
And few the fair banks of the Eden shall gain ;
And Annan shall sweep past the dead on her shore,
And the moss by the Lochar be purple with gore (v).

XXXIII.

In Cumberland's dales, on her mountainous rocks
Their slain shall be food for the wolf and the fox ;
And the beak of the raven with crimson be dyed,
And the "corbie" shall join the grim feast by his
side.

Our patriots are true, for their spirits are high,
Our weapons are keen when the Southron is nigh ;
Thy banner, Saint Andrew, high floating, shall wave
And guide to the battle the valiant and brave.

Then, rally ! each son in our own bonnie land,
And shoulder to shoulder undaunted we'll stand !
For Scotia's children will never cry "truce"
Till Edward of England shall bow to the Bruce !

Then the glorious tidings of victory won
Like the flashing of lightning through Scotland shall
run,
And they who have fought with King Robert shall see
The patriot triumphant, and Scotia free !

CANTO II.

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO II.

DEDICATED TO

THE COUNTESS OF STAIR.

OH ! were I but a bonnie bird,
And if my heart was hap'ly stirr'd
My native land to traverse o'er,—
I'd scan her beauty, cull her lore,
And seek her gems from shore to shore.
I'd cleave with beating wing the sky,
And pierce the azure world on high ;
With gladsome voice I'd gaily sing,
On joyous pinion upward wing.
And this the burden of my song,
As with the breeze I swept along :—
“ Few beauteous scenes in Scotland gay
Are fairer than fair Galloway ;
And few, I ween, can well compare
With hill and glen in lovely Ayr.
In short, throughout the Bruce's land
Go fame and beauty hand in hand.”

Then shall from Scottish memories fade

Those glorious scenes that *he* surveyed?
And shall not thoughts of Wallace move
Our swelling hearts to patriot love?
Say! dweller midst the city's roar,
Far from the sea, the purple moor,
Far from the melody of birds,
Or lowing of the browsing herds,
Far distant from the pastures green,
Far from the forest's leafy screen,
Where honest labour paints the cheek
That healthy hue ye vainly seek,
Say, toiler, wouldst thou ever rue
 (Were all the past a dream,)
Couldst thou commence thy life anew,
Making thy home in constant view
 Of some familiar stream?
Where herons stand with straining gaze,
As trout in murd'rous bills they raise,
And anglers see on summer days,
When the bright rays the waters glaze,
 The salmon's silv'ry gleam?

Or wouldst thou choose by some lone lake
Thy wand'ring way to slowly take,
Perchance thy steps may roam with me,
By ancient Castle Kennedy (A),
Where on the loch's fair bosom wide,
Ten thousand wavelets in their pride,
 Are dancing in the sun.
And where the sea-mew loves to ride,

Where 'mid the sedge the grebe may glide,
And waterhens may make their nest,
And duck and teal delight to rest

Secure from snare or gun.

Here, round each lovely tarn are seen
The rushes with a brighter green,
As nod they to the summer breeze
That sighs amongst the forest trees,

Which waving overhead,

Form many a fair and verdant arch,
And where the tassels of the larch

Are gay with green and red.

In quiet glades we here may see
The trusty keeper's "gibbet tree,"
Whose victims' bodies in the breeze
Dance here and there among the trees.
There hang suspended hawk and crow,
And beasts who wander to and fro,

And haunt the woods by night,

And mountain cats that slowly prow!

And e'en the inoffensive owl,—

A sad but frequent sight,

That fell to that unerring aim

Which might have sought a nobler game ! (B)

Sadly their draggled corpses swing,
While zephyrs soft their requiem sing.

But wander northwards now once more,
And traverse fair Loch Ryan's shore,
Where countless vessels gaily ride,

With snowy canvas on her tide,
As steer they for the Firth of Clyde,
Or to fair Erin take their way,
And anchor cast in Belfast bay.
And pause we where thy braes, Glen App (c),
Rise proudly from old ocean's lap.
Now cast thine eyes around thee where
Many of nature's beauties rare—
All scatter'd in profusion there—
Combine to make the prospect fair
 And pleasant to the eye.
Above yon hills, where hot beams glance
Athwart the sky, and seem to dance
For joy, his charms the sun expands,
Reminding you of sunny lands
 Beyond the seas that lie.
Who would not love these mountains drear,
Where summer each returning year
 The shepherd's heart makes glad?
When lambs rejoice in every glen,
And when each steep hill side's again
 With purple heather clad?
When sings for joy each tiny stream,
And dances 'neath the sunny gleam,
And grouse take flight on hast'ning wings,
And where the mountain ouzle sings,
And where the wily partridge hides,
And where the hare's dark russet sides
Are hidden 'neath the bracken green,
And where Dame Nature reigns serene!

If homelier scenes you'd wander o'er,
Come, seek them by the Ayrshire shore,
Where cottage sweet and pasture green
On every hand enrich the scene.
Where bees pursue their busy road,
All laden with their golden load,
And take a toll in nectar sweet,
From every bloom they hap to meet,
And insects of the passing hour
Flaunt in the sun their tiny power,
And butterflies, whose wings of blue
Shine brighter than the heaven's hue,
Are flitting gay on every side,
Where flowers are scatter'd far and wide.
Or, further from old ocean's shore,
Wouldst thou some woody glen explore,
Or search for glee the forest o'er?
Where, if the summer sun above
Compels thee in some quiet grove
To rest awhile, and seek the shade,
Thou'lt chance on many a lovely glade,
Where even to this day, 'tis said,
That elfin troops, in garments red,
 Their mimic battles fight.
All mounted on their goblin steeds,
Still charge they on with bulrush reeds,
 Oft in the pale moonlight.
And well 'tis known, each Hallow-e'en
Their ladies, dress'd in gold and green,
 Dance gay with circling tread (p).

The marks of whom thou still may'st see,
If o'er the wilds thou roam'st with me,

 In many a flow'ry mead.

Then, o'er our native land so fair,
Wander, I pray thee, lady fair,
And I'll transport thee in my lays
To olden scenes of olden days.
List to the harp, so thou may'st see
A glimpse of ancient chivalry,
And at thy kindly look and word,
I strike again the trembling chord !

CANTO II.

STANZA I.

THE peasant seeks his humble shed,
And on his pillow rests his head,
The deer have sought their forest bed,
The grouse are couch'd 'mongst heather red.
The smiling river sweetly laves
The weeping birch that o'er it waves ;
And gently quivering aspen trees
Are bowing to the evening breeze.
The flow'rets veil their petals bright,
And close them till returning light
Proclaims the morn, and drives away
The shades of night from Wigtown Bay.
The birds are silent on the tree,
All peaceful are the banks of Cree,
Whose rippling stream so fair and wide
Rolls to the sea her silver tide.

II.

Beyond those distant hills the sun
Once more his brief career hath run :
On distant Cairnsmore's hoary crest
The latest sunbeams love to rest.
Ebbs to its close the summer's day,
But still a ling'ring crimson ray (A)

Falls soft on Garlies tower.
And high upon the ivied wall,
On barbican and buttress tall,
The glowing light doth gently fall,
And on yon windows barr'd and small

That mark my lady's bower.
While on the donjon's tow'ring height
The shadows point the less'ning light,
And on the ramparts' wall below
A soldier paces to and fro,
With spear in hand and footstep slow,
While on his armour falls the glow

Reflected from the skies.
That warder stays his measured tread,
And to the westward turns his head,
Where all the sky is gold and red,

And then he deeply sighs,
And fondly looks with conscious pride
To Scotland's banner flaunting wide

High o'er the donjon's keep.
As dies the lingering light away
He lowers down that banner gay,

And piles it in a heap.
As in his hand the flag he holds
He gently smooths its ruffled folds,
Surveys with love its silver cross,
Wonders if all the world be dross,
And thinks on Scotland's gain or loss
If England shall o'er Scotia reign,
Or Bruce shall have his own again.

III.

A tear-drop trembles in his eye,
He heaves a deep but inward sigh,
And sadly then the warrior bold
Addresses thus that banner old :
" Flag of my fathers ! thou didst wave
High o'er the true, the young, the brave,
And oft o'er many a patriot's grave.
And shalt thou bow to foreign knave,
And own thyself an English slave ?
Saint Andrew ! that thou shalt not do,
If Scotland to herself be true !
Shall all our cherished hopes be vain,
Or shall we see thee wave again,
The emblem of the proud, the free,
From north to south, from sea to sea ?
God and Saint Andrew help the right !
And bring us aid and give us might
To free our loved but conquered land,
To call our own our ocean strand,

Where few may dare to raise a hand,
And none may think to bear a brand,
Save by the leave of England's lord
Who rules our soil by fire and sword !”

IV.

“ And is that banner yet the same
Or shadow of its ancient fame,
And Scotland's emblem but in name ?
Yet Bruce hath sworn the English yoke
From off our necks shall yet be broke.
And if that glorious day shall be,
May Donald Blain be there to see !
For though my eyes be dim and old,
I trust my spirit is as bold
As e'er it was when life was young,
When lays of love I lightly sung,
And for my king my latest blood
Should welter in a crimson flood ;
For him my life I gladly live,
For him that life as freely give !
And if I fall, as fall I may,
Beside the Bruce in battle's day,
Who then shall say the death was vain
Of the poor patriot Donald Blain ? ”

V.

The warder on the eastern towers
With one last glance the horizon scours,

But now the night is falling fast,
And in the dusk the owl glides past.
As on the stair he ling'ring stays,
A distant figure meets his gaze,
He marvels if 'tis friend or foe
Who wanders through the woods below.
He sees that lonely figure turn,
And take the path from Penkill burn,
Then turn once more, and onward straight
It comes toward the castle gate.
He hurries down the winding stair
The stranger's coming to declare,
But e'er he gains the guard-room door
A din pervades the castle o'er.
The watchman's trumpet now is braying,
The bandogs loudly round are baying,
The 'larum bell is ringing loud,
While to their posts the soldiers crowd :
And pages hasten to and fro
The cause of this turmoil to know.
None stay'd to hear old Donald shout
"One lonely stranger waits without."
Yet scarcely would that stranger wait,
But struck impatient on the gate,
And rang the clanging bell.
And while the hast'ning warder ran
Through loop-hole slit the guest to scan,
A soldier toil'd with might and main,
Then creak'd and rattled many a chain,
And down the drawbridge fell.

VI.

As 'neath the archway grim and wide
The stranger came with hasty stride
The warder made obeisance fair,
Ask'd what might be his pleasure there ;
And wish'd he food or needed jade,
Or came he there for warrior's aid,
Or shelter sought from neighb'ring raid ?
But thus the stranger answer made :—
“ From chasing the deer have I wander'd here,
I have lost my gallant hound.
The forest shades are dark and drear
And the night is gath'ring round,
And I pray for a word with your lady fair
As she sits in her maiden bower,
Or quickly speed and mine errand bear
To the lord of Garlies' tower.
And say that a stranger needs a guide
To point him out the way,
For he must win to the further side
Of Dee by break of day.
And here, beside the castle gate,
Till thou bring'st me tidings back, I wait.”

VII.

“ Not so, my lord, ” the warder said,
And he look'd the stranger o'er,—
That flashing eye and cheek so red

He sure had seen before.
And he saw, though all undeck'd for fight,
The stranger was a stalwart knight ;—
“ But rest thee in the inner hall,
Till I my lady's maidens call.
My lord hath gone to Saint Ninian's shrine,
To pray that heaven on Bruce may shine.
He quitted the castle at dawn of day,
So I bear thy request to my lady gay.”
A minute of time had scarce flown by
When he heard a rustle, a step, and a sigh,
And a beautiful damsel both youthful and fair
Stept into the hall from a turret stair :
She carried a lyre in her graceful hand,
And a deerhound led by a silken band,
And it oft look'd up in her gentle face,
That told she came of a noble race.
She gazed at the wanderer keen and long,
And then broke forth in a joyous song,
While the stranger join'd in his turn the lay,
For both were youthful and both were gay.

VIII.

SONG.

Fair stranger, fair stranger,
What bringest thou here ?
Dost hail from the battle,
Or chasing the deer ?

Though reck's it but little,
All hail to our hall,
For the castle of Garlies
Is open to all.

Dost ask me, fair maiden,
Why wander I here ?
I come, gentle maiden,
From chasing the deer,
From hunting the stag,
And from chasing the doe,
I came, lovely maiden ;
Fair maiden, I go.

Nay, loveliest stranger,
Thou shalt not depart ;
Thou art light to mine eyes,
Thou art joy to mine heart.
Few gallants come hither
Our time to beguile,
So I pray thee, fair stranger,
To linger a while.

Fair maiden, fair maiden,
I would I could stay,
And linger beside thee
For ever and aye,
To come at thy bidding,
Then ecstasy sip
From the beam of thine eye
And the dew of thy lip.

Thou'rt gallant, fair stranger,
 But dost thou not fear
 To wander alone when
 The Southron is near?
 And dost thou not tremble
 When daylight hath flown
 At the sprites of the wood
 When they meet thee alone?

IX.

SONG (*continued*).

Oh ! nay, gentle lady,
 No Southron I fear ;
 For keen is my broad-sword,
 And trusty my spear ;
 And phantom and spectre,
 And goblin and sprite,
 At the sign of the cross
 Will betake them to flight.

Our castle, brave stranger,
 Good cheer doth afford ;
 And the banquet is ready
 And spread on the board !
 Our wine it is ancient,
 But ruddy and bright,
 So I pray thee to linger,
 For dark is the night.

Though the castle of Garlies
Good cheer doth afford,
And the banquet to tempt me
Lies spread on the board,
Nor maiden nor banquet
May be my excuse
If on dawning of morning
I find not the Bruce.

Oh ! loveliest stranger,
If that be thy quest,
A heart of my own
I have found in my guest.
No maiden's entreaty
Shall tempt thee to stay ;
Then follow, fair stranger,
I point out the way.

Let us hasten, brave damsel,
Nor longer delay ;
The stars shall direct us
Till breaking of day,
When each bonnie bird
In the forest shall sing
The wish of our hearts in
" Success to the King."

x.

As Marg'ret Stewart quits the hall,
Her women, at their mistress' call,

Array her quickly for the quest.
She then salutes her ready guest ;
But, e'er they go, a gentle page
Who never heard the battle rage,
Whose blushing cheek and boyish gait
Proclaim him fit on dames to wait,
Offers to each, on bended knee,
As well bespeaks their high degree,
A brimming cup of ruddy hue,
In which they toast, as was his due,
The name of Scotland's patriot king,
While loudly round his praises ring !
And then they cross the Castle yard,
And quickly gain the outer ward.
The massive gate is all unbarr'd,
The barbican is swiftly pass'd ;
And many a turret's shadow vast
Upon the moat below is cast ;
While gaily through the summer sky
The silver moon is riding high.
The warders ply the heavy chain,
And raise the drawbridge up again,
And let the stout portcullis fall,
And then betake them to the hall,
Where gaily pass the festive hours
With maidens from my lady's bowers.
For well they know their lady gay
Will roam the woods till break of day,
In sooth—she said—till past the dawn
They should not hear her bugle horn.

XI.

And now is Lady Margaret guide,
The stranger follows by her side,
Then up a steep ascent they wind,
And leave the Castle far behind,
And swiftly gain the woody bowers
That rise above the Castle's towers.
And through that dark and silent glade
No path had mortal footstep made:
They scarce could pierce the dusky gloom
Where nightshade shed its rank perfume.
Where human foot doth seldom roam,
The fierce wild boar hath made its home,
And darksome caverns 'mong the rocks
Asylum give to wolf or fox.
And mighty oaks of monster girth
Spread their gnarl'd roots upon the earth.
Those patriarch giants long have stood
As guardians o'er the neighb'ring wood.
They stretch their branching arms around,
As though to guard enchanted ground,
Where rays of light are seldom seen,
Where briony is dank and green,
Where grows the fungus, white and red,
And branches mingled overhead,
And all the wood seem'd fill'd with gloom,
As though it were some fearful tomb.

XII.

Yet onward sped that maiden fair,
As if her home was ever there :
For seldom did she turn aside,
But swiftly forward seem'd to glide,
As move across some quiet lake
The bonnie duck and gallant drake.
No signs of life the eye or ear
Assail, unless perchance they hear
The prowling wolf's ferocious growl,
Or distant watch-dog's dreary howl,
Or breathing of the snoring owl,
As sleeps she by her callow brood
Deep in that wooded solitude.
As on they press'd, fair Marg'ret sang,
And sweetly round her young voice rang;
Her heart was light, her converse gay,
And so familiar seem'd the way,
The stranger asked the lady fair
If she had often wander'd there.
And then she told with simple glee
How well she loves each flowery lea ;
And how she loves each glen and stream,
And in their solitude could dream
Until the glorious summer's day
In quiet beauty glides away.
And, as he press'd for more to hear,
She told to his attentive ear
How oft it happ'd at earliest dawn

Her brethren went with bugle horn,
With shaft and bow, and gallant hound,
To scour the woodland miles around
In search of boar or russet roe,
Of noble stag, or forest doe.

XIII.

And how she join'd them in their sport,
And deem'd the happy day too short :
And how she oft had sought her bed
'Mongst golden broom and heather red,
Or how the bracken's folds of green
Her forest couch had often been.
Or how, mayhap, some ancient yew
Had screen'd her from the midnight dew,
And how she sweetly slept till dawn
Proclaim'd the advent of the morn.
How then, their early meal they took,
With draughts from out the crystal brook :
Then would the hounds the chase renew,
When fresh the scent lay on the dew ;
How she had roam'd these woodlands wild,
Since e'er she was a tottering child ;
And how she could her pathway take
By mountain, river, glen, and lake,
For many a mile round Garlies' tower ;
And how she could the country scour,
And win her way by day or night,
And pierce the woods to left or right,

To north, or south, to east or west,
And gain at length the wish'd for quest ;
And how she could an arrow speed,
Or spear the salmon at her need,
Could through the rapids guide her boat,
Or in the river swim or float ;
Or deeply dive, with bated breath,
To seek the pearls that lie beneath (B),
Hid in the fairy mussel shell,
That Scottish maidens love so well.

XIV.

She told him how she loved to ride,
To skim the pasture far and wide ;
To bear her hawk upon her glove,
To see him cleave the sky above,
And strike his quarry in the air,
And then to watch the falling pair.
But now the English loons were near
It were not safe to chase the deer,
Nor fly the hawk, nor cheer the hound,
For were not foemen all around ?
Nor was it wise for lonely maid
To wander through the woodland glade,
But—as for her—so well she knew
Each dark retreat—none might pursue ;
So through the glade she'd wend her way,
'Neath murk of night or glare of day.

XV.

Then told she how, one autumn morn,
Her brothers went, with hound and horn,
To seek a sorely stricken deer
Which linger'd in the forest near.
And how her brother Allan bade
Her guard the entrance to the glade;
How, while their halloas rang around,
Replied the baying of the hound,
And how the stag rush'd quickly past,
And how the deer-hound follow'd fast;
Then close behind, a savage boar
With foaming tusk, all streak'd with gore,
Broke sudden from the thickest wood,
And charged upon her where she stood.
And how she on the instant drew
To full extent her bow of yew (c),
And how her arrow pierced him through,
And thus that mighty boar she slew!
Then, how her brothers, hastening, found
The monster dead upon the ground:
Her shaft had pierced his very heart,
Proud trophy of her woodland art!

XVI.

And next she told, with girlish pride,
She acted once her brother's guide
To grim Craignelder's distant crest (d),

Where human footsteps never press'd,
For there she knew an eagle's nest.
They climb'd the height at break of day—
It was a rough and rugged way—
And when the top at length they gain,
They find the labour was not vain ;
Far o'er the ledge so grey and steep,
Where goats may scarce a footing keep,
A rope around her waist, she went
On plunder of the eerie bent.
How Ronald held the cord above,
And how, with hand encased in glove,
The eaglets from the nest she took,
And how her hempen girdle shook,
While all around her laughter rung,
And how her body swinging hung,
Till Ronald strain'd with might and main,
And brought her safely up again !

XVII.

The stranger's face is wreathed in smiles
As thus the maid their way beguiles ;
For truth to tell he loved to see,
When youthful fire and ecstasy
Had brighten'd all that damsel's face,
As some rememb'rance of the chase
Pass'd quickly through her active brain,
To hear her tell the tale again.
And still they journey thro' the night,

For soon the sunrise fair and bright
Will drive away the gloomy shade,
And lighten up each woodland glade.
He mark'd not, 'neath the veil of night
(Though still the stars were shining bright)
The blushes that unbidden came,
As shyly ask'd the maid his name,
And wondered if 'twere known to Fame,
And marvels who her guest may be,
And what might be his high degree.
For well that gentle damsel knew
That mantle slash'd with gold and blue
And jewell'd dirk were never worn
By Scottish soldier humbly born,
Such eye of fire, such noble mien,
In common clay were never seen.
Nor had she met a gallant knight
With face as fair, or glance as bright :
In short, this stranger to her eye
A pattern was of chivalry.

XVIII.

The warrior, at the maid's request,
His name and rank at length confess'd,
When she a dozen names had guess'd ;
For he had bid her quickly find
The name best suited to her mind.
Then to the listening lady told,
He sprang from lineage proud and old,

And how on Scotland's roll of fame
He—Edward—hoped to write his name ;
Then, turning to the lovely maid,
He doff'd his cap and gaily said :
“ And now myself I introduce
As brother to the royal Bruce !
He will receive my fairy guide
(If still she journey by my side),
And lead her to the damsels' cave
That looks on Dee's romantic wave,
Where dames who love our monarch well
In times like these securely dwell.
There shall she meet such ready cheer
As best befits the mountaineer :
With joy they'll greet a lady fair,
And bid her doubly welcome there.”

XIX.

As onward still they held their way,
The summer night gave place to-day.
Each twinkling star had veil'd its head,
The distant hills were tipp'd with red.
The sky was bright'ning when they stood
Beneath the shade of Caldon's wood : *
The morning air was soft and cool
When paused they by the Loch of Trool ;
And here the maiden made excuse,
And bad adieu to Edward Bruce.
For fair Glentrool full well he knew,

* See note o to Canto I.

And loved he well its waters blue.
"And she must be in her maiden's bower
To welcome her father to Garlies' tower,
As comes he from Saint Ninian's shrine (E)
That very eve at the hour of nine,
And she must pour him the ruby wine.
'Tis she must unfasten his buckler and sword,
And sit by his side at the festal board,
For dear is his daughter to Garlies' lord!"
Gay Edward thank'd his lovely guide,
Who press'd his hand, then homeward hied,
And as she vanish'd from his sight
His heart went with that lady bright.
But thoughts of love must not impede
The course he onward holds with speed,
For, by Saint Andrew, hath he need!
And now Lord Edward skirts the lake,
And holds his way 'mid briar and brake;
And e'er another hour hath past
He gains the Bruce's cave at last.
But marvell'd much as nigh he drew
No sentinel appear'd in view,
Nor smoke, to his observant eye,
Curl'd up, as wonted, to the sky.
He thunder'd on the cavern door,
Then stalk'd across the rocky floor,
And shouted loudly through the cave,
But only echo answer gave,
And all was silent as the grave.
In haste he quits the empty cave,

And glances o'er the distant wave.
The sun is shining fair and free
Upon the lake of lovely Dee ;
And as he scans its surface o'er,
He sees upon the farther shore
A shallop in a shelter'd bay,
Which points him out at once the way
His royal brother lately took
When he the mountain cave forsook.

XX.

See now impatient Edward race (F)
Across the intervening space.
With agile step he spurns the heath,
Nor doth he need to stay for breath :
From rock to rock he lightly bounds,
Like mountain deer before the hounds.
And, leaping burn and boulder o'er,
He swiftly gains the heath'ry shore,
And quickly then he skirts the lake,
And wades amongst the verdant brake,
And dashes through the golden broom,
Which sheds around its sweet perfume :
And rudely wakes the timid hare,
That in her " form " was sleeping there ;
And many a grouse high raised its head
In wonder from its purple bed,
To see the intruder hurrying by,
Then took its flight with startled cry.

But round the lake he wends his way
Until he gains the little bay
In which the boat forsaken lay.
He look'd it o'er, and search'd it well,
But yon frail vessel cannot tell
The tidings Edward hopes to know,
Or give him word of friend or foe,
And where it 'hoves him now to go.

XXI.

East, west, and south he turn'd his head,
Then toward the north at hazard sped,
But many a weary mile he trod
O'er rocky fell and heaving sod.
He breasted many a mountain steep,
And waded many a river deep,
And traversed many a sterile plain,
But all his search as yet was vain.
He wanders on o'er glen and hill,
And crosses many a sparkling rill ;
No mortal being meets his eye,
No creature answers to his cry,
Except the plover on the brae,
In black and golden plumage gay (G),
Who scares him from her nest away,
Or the lone curlew's plaintive wails,
As round his head it sadly sails.
Or else, perchance, the falcon's cry,
As speeds he through the azure sky,

Falls sharp on Edward's straining ear,
That makes each distant sound seem near ;
For every bird asylum kind
In Carrick's wilds may surely find ;
And every beast that loves to roam
In Buchan's depths may make its home.
He scann'd in turn, with eagle eye,
Hill, glen, and dale as he pass'd by ;
And many a note his bugle wound
Which brought but echoes ringing round,
Until at length he hears a blast
Upon the wind borne floating past.
He list'ning stands, and then again
He hears with joy the answer'ing strain.
No echo now ! That note he knows,
'Tis only Bruce the bugle blows !

XXII.

He left the loch of Dee at morn ;
At eve he heard his brother's horn.
The shadows of the night were cast
Upon the mountains, when at last
He grasps King Robert by the hand,
Surrounded by his gallant band.
Their mutual gratulation o'er,
Impatient Edward quickly bore
His brother to a rocky stone,
Where they could talk awhile alone.
And now the monarch hears him tell

How yester-eve, in bosky dell,
Beside the shores of silvery Cree,
He saw beneath a mighty tree
Two Southron varlets sleeping sound,
And how he softly crept around,
Then rudely woke them from their rest,
His sword upon their bosoms press'd.
And if they silent stay'd, he swore
That they should wake to life no more.
If what they knew they'd quickly tell,
It still, forsooth, should all be well.
How then the rascals laugh'd, and told
How Clifford and De Vallance bold (H)
That very night had armed a band
Of valiant men by Minnock's strand,
And how they meant at break of day
O'er hill and vale to take their way,
And scour the wilds for miles around,
And hunt the Bruce with horse and hound,
And how Lord Clifford wished for chance
With Robert Bruce to break a lance ;
How then he let those traitors go,
And hurried here the news to show.

XXIII.

King Robert now divides his band,
And sends them forth on either hand ;
The one to guard a narrow pass,
That lay beyond a deep morass ;
The other troop, 'neath Edward's care,

Betake themselves to slumber there,
While Robert Bruce and Gilbert Haye
Swift to a river wend their way,
Where, on a height above the shore,
They well can scan the mountains o'er.
And here doth Gilbert fall asleep,
While Bruce the lonely watch will keep ;
Nor doth he wish to court repose,
His mind is centred on his foes,
How best he may their strength oppose.
And feelings in his bosom rose,

As when old ocean sends
Her surges on a rocky shore,
And as she rages more and more,
Each tow'ring wave with sullen roar
Some mighty vessel rends.

So was his gallant bosom torn :
For was not Bruce's spirit worn

By trials few could bear ?
As thought he of his gentle wife (1),
At once his love, his Queen, his life ;
And shall he see her face again ?
And shall he break her captive chain ?

And how, and when, and where ?
Now dwelt he on his sister's fate,
A further proof of Edward's hate,
Of Mary fair in Roxburgh tower,
Christina, in some southern bower ;
But what may be her doom of woe,
Or where conceal'd, he may not know.

XXIV.

Next to Carlisle his memory flies,
Where many a Scottish patriot lies ;
Where moulder in a felon's grave,
The gay, the proud, the young, the brave.
Then thought he of his brethren twain (j),
By English Edward foully slain.
Poor Alexander's bleeding head,
And Thomas Bruce's, dripping red,
 Appear before his gaze :
And gallant Crawford's bloody fate,
And fierce McDowall's deadly hate,
 Combine his wrath to raise.
Then, 'fore his eyes a vision rose,
Where bars of wood a cage enclose (κ),
Secured with iron bolt and band,
And lock'd by servile English hand,
Where sorrow'd Buchan's lonely dame,
But still as lovely—still the same
As when the King at ancient Scone
Was sitting on his oaken throne,
The golden crown she took in hand,—
The fairest dame in all the land,—
While shouts of acclamation ring,
She crown'd her country's patriot King.
Such is her crime ! and such her fate :
Sad proof of Edward's vengeful hate.
And shall he vent his puny spite
Upon a lady fair and bright ?

What tale for future bards to tell,
How England's monarch thought it well
To treat a woman like a lion,
And fence her round with bars of iron !

XXV.

And in yon fleecy clouds on high
That hasten through the midnight sky,
The sorrowing monarch e'en can trace
The outline dim of Nigel's face (L),
As, sadly bent his haughty head,
A prisoner from Kildrummie led,
His captors bear him fast away,
Till Berwick claims its envied prey.
Saw ever Scotland better knight ?
For Nigel fought a glorious fight !
Kildrummie's walls are stain'd with blood,
That welter'd in a crimson flood
From many a Southron's ebbing life
Who perished in that bloody strife,
Where many a thrilling deed was done,
And hardly had the English won,
Where inner walls so grimly frown,
Or hauled Saint Andrew's banner down,
Till treason's hand within
Was raised for love of Southern gold,
And Northern hand had basely sold
To Hereford the citadel,
Which Nigel's arm had kept so well,

And valour failed to win.
But see, upon the scaffold bare,
Poor Nigel stands, his streaming hair
 A halo round his head,
Till in the morning breeze he swung,
Like felon thief, at Berwick hung,—
 The gallant knight is dead.
All honour to his glorious name!
So proud of heart, so free of blame,
So high on Scotland's roll of fame,
 So gentle, though so bold!
For glory rests on such as he,
Who die to make their country free,
And honour'd aye shall Nigel be,
 Where'er the story's told!

XXVI.

Such thoughts but give the monarch might
To battle harder for the right,
And sadden'd memory arms his hand
For vengeance on the foeman band.
Such thoughts as his, like potent charm,
But brace the heart and nerve the arm,
And fire the warrior's eagle eye,
And give him power to do or die!
His soul of madd'ning visions dreams;
And yonder, where with dancing beams
The moonlight on the river gleams,
 What fearful sight is there?

'Tis naught in truth !—yet, to his eyes,
A ghastly vision seems to rise,
And patriot friends of former days
Are gath'ring fast before his gaze,
And to his side repair.

But, as they cross the dark'ning flood,
He sees their hands are red with blood,
As raise they up their arms on high
To show how Scottish warriors die,
Each ghastly phantom lifts its head
From off its shoulders, streaming red.
And who are all this ghostly band
Who near their monarch silent stand?
Why raised on high each bloody hand?

And seek they war or truce?
Was such a group of spectre men
E'er seen before by mortal ken?—
'Twere easy task to write each name,
For all are known to Scotland's fame,
And all are known to Bruce.

XXVII.

There Simon Frazer waves his brand (M),
And Somerville hath sword in hand,
And brave De Boys hath taken stand
By Athole stout and bold.
His mighty weapon Logan bore,
De Morham looks his armour o'er,
Inchmartin stands beside the shore

With Wallace, as of old !
Now forward strode the King apace,
And look'd on each familiar face
Where suff'ring's seal he still may trace,

And then aloud he cried :

" O God ! that such a gallant band
Be foully slain by Edward's hand !
Now cursed be Edward's cruel hate ;
Avenged shall be your awful fate

Who for your country died ! "

Thus spake the Bruce. No answering word
From all those silent lips he heard,
But dimmer grew each warrior's face
Until their forms he scarce could trace ;
Then dark and lowering grew the sky,
And all bespoke a tempest nigh.
And then a fierce and sudden breath
Of heated air swept o'er the heath,
And next the lightning's vivid flash,
Amid the thunder's deaf'ning crash,
Illumes the mighty rocks around,
As if 'twere some enchanted ground,
And all those spectres standing there
Have melted on the midnight air.

XXVIII.

The thunder clouds have roll'd away ;
The moon again her silver ray
Hath far upon the mountains cast

(So swiftly hath the tempest past).
That lovely orb, whose gentle light
Disperses all the gloom of night.
And now the monarch, left alone,
Reclines beside a massive stone.
Yet not alone, for De la Haye
Beneath a boulder sleeping lay.
And see, below his wearied head
A pillow soft of heather red ;
Around his armour thrown his plaid,
His helm and spear beside him laid,
His flaxen ringlets all around
Were streaming wild upon the ground.
But still he grasps his naked brand,
To guard his king from hostile hand,
Thus, e'en in slumber vigil keeping,
So gently rests the warrior sleeping.
Now all is silent, save for cry
Of wildfowl from the moonlit sky,
Or wail of plover from the moor
Who doth his lonely lot deplore ;
Or chorus of the croaking frog,
That echoes o'er the neighb'ring bog,
Or when the gently rippling wave
Its music to the night wind gave.

XXIX.

But, hark ! upon the Bruce's ear
Falls through the air of midnight clear

A distant, low, and muffled cheer ;
While tramp of horse and clank of spear
 Are borne upon the breeze.
To Haye the monarch softly cried,
And hasten'd Gilbert to his side,
 And fall they on their knees.
They place their straining ears to ground,
To better catch the distant sound :
And Gilbert, though he nought can spy,
Detects the bloodhound's dreaded cry ;
And closer yet, and nearer still
Come martial sounds across the hill.
And voices of approaching men
Distinctly echo up the glen :
While o'er the rocky fell resounds (N)
The baying of the savage hounds,
Whose ardour scarce may iron chain,
Held by their masters' hand, restrain.
As forward press, with fearsome bay,
Those dreaded dogs of brindled grey,
Their lowered muzzles sniff the scent
That points the way the monarch went.
And now again those chilling notes,
Re-echo from their husky throats.
And soon they stand, in clearer view,
Against the sky, a trait'rous crew,
And sheds the moon her tell-tale light
On glancing helm and weapon bright.
Then whispers Bruce to gallant Haye,
" Those traitors hail from Galloway.

May infamy around them cling,
Yon villains would betray their king,
And train a hound to hunt to death (o)
Their monarch on his native heath.
But vengeance cometh soon or late,
Perchance to-night they meet their fate ! ”

xxx.

Then answer'd gallant De la Haye :
“ There yet is time to speed away,
For full two hundred men I spy,
And how may two a host defy ?
 ’Twere folly here to stay.
Come, liege my lord, and haste we then
To where we left our sleeping men,
And bid them rally in the glen :
 Nor longer here delay.”
“ Not so, my faith ! ” the Bruce replied,
“ Who crosses o’er yon silv’ry tide—
 If he would win the land—
Must fain this narrow path ascend,
Which Bruce’s sword can well defend
 Against that hostile band.
But haste thee, Gilbert, haste away,
And summon thou our brave array,
 And bid them come with speed.
God aid thee now the hill to cross,
And bring them swiftly o’er the moss
 To help us at our need.

While I this narrow way will hold :
Who wins the brow must needs be bold !
For is not Bruce's arm as strong
To battle 'gainst his country's wrong
 As e'er in times gone by ?
And God shall aid the Bruce's hand
To hold at bay yon varlet band :
 Who passes here shall die !
Then shall we let this 'vantage go ?
No, by our good Saint Andrew, no ! ”

XXXI.

The monarch spoke, and De la Haye
Sped swiftly o'er the hills away,
And left alone the gallant Bruce,
Who now his sword prepares for use,
 And grasps his pointed spear.
And then he climbs the rocky brae
That overlooks that narrow way,
And shouts aloud, “ Who comes to-day
 To taste the Bruce's cheer ?
An' cross ye o'er the opposing flood
Full many a knave shall choke in blood
 Ere land be gain'd, or drown ! ”
But girds he up his armour now,
And tightly o'er his throbbing brow
 He shuts the vizor down,
And bravely on that lonely rock
He stands prepared for battle shock.

Scarce did the foe the Bruce espy
When storms of hostile arrows fly,
And loud the savage Gall'way cry
 Of vengeance rends the air.
But many a shaft flew passing wide,
His armour turns the rest aside,
And e'en the foe survey with pride
 The Bruce undaunted there.
For gallant deeds of warrior art
Can animate the rudest heart ;
And feats of valour ever best
Impression make on savage breast.

XXXII.

But now a knight comes spurring fast
 Across the glist'ning flood :
His comrades wildly press behind
 To drink the Bruce's blood.
How swiftly o'er the river wide
 Swim horse and hound and man,
But soon beneath the rippling tide
 Sank he who led the van :
For Bruce hath sped a trusty shaft,
 And pierced his helmet through ;
And the fierce bloodhound, ere his feet
 touch'd ground,
 Another arrow slew.
Upon the river's farther side,
 As press they toward the stream,

The moonlight, where the foemen ride,
Sheds down her silver beam.
The savage warriors by the shore
Cry "Onward, comrades bold,
And swiftly cross the river o'er!"
But those in front cry "Hold!"
For see, the first to gain the land
Hath met his fate at Bruce's hand.
He was a gallant knight and gay
That strove to win that narrow way,
And never dream'd his soul of fear
As met his shield the Bruce's spear.
He strove to fell the King to ground,
But Bruce's sword was flashing round,
And Bruce's spear was long and keen,
And pierced the foeman's joints between,
Clear through his helm, and through his head:
As sank he to the river's bed,
Its silvery wave turn'd crimson red;
And Bruce to block the deadly way
That warrior's steed was fain to slay.
Between the rock and river's edge
The war-horse lay—a ghastly wedge.
But o'er the fallen press the foe,
While Bruce, above, strikes down below,
And wields his mighty axe around,
And fells the Gall'way men to ground.
And as they press to gain the brae,
His sword and spear keep all at bay.
While still their weapons meet and clash,

And still the axes loudly crash.
What valour could has e'en been done,
But none the deadly gap have won !

XXXIII.

Now in that pathway dark and steep
Are piled on high a ghastly heap
Of bodies of the slain.
Both man and steed lie dying there,
But o'er the dead the foemen bear
As dash they on again.
And shout they now " He may not last ! " (P)
As yet once more those warriors fast
Come spurring on the brae to gain,
But all their valour is in vain,
For Bruce's axe and Bruce's sword
Are still as good as Bruce's word,
And battle bravely for their lord,
As shouts the monarch o'er the flood,
" Avenge, ye knaves, your comrades' blood ! "
And still that massive sword and shield,
Which none but he can hold or wield (Q),
Do glorious work, and win the field.
For sudden 'bove the din of fight
Comes from the mountain's rugged height
A mighty shout that shakes the sky,
And brings the echoes from on high
" The Bruce ! the Bruce ! " his followers cry,
" The Bruce ! the Bruce ! " the foe reply,

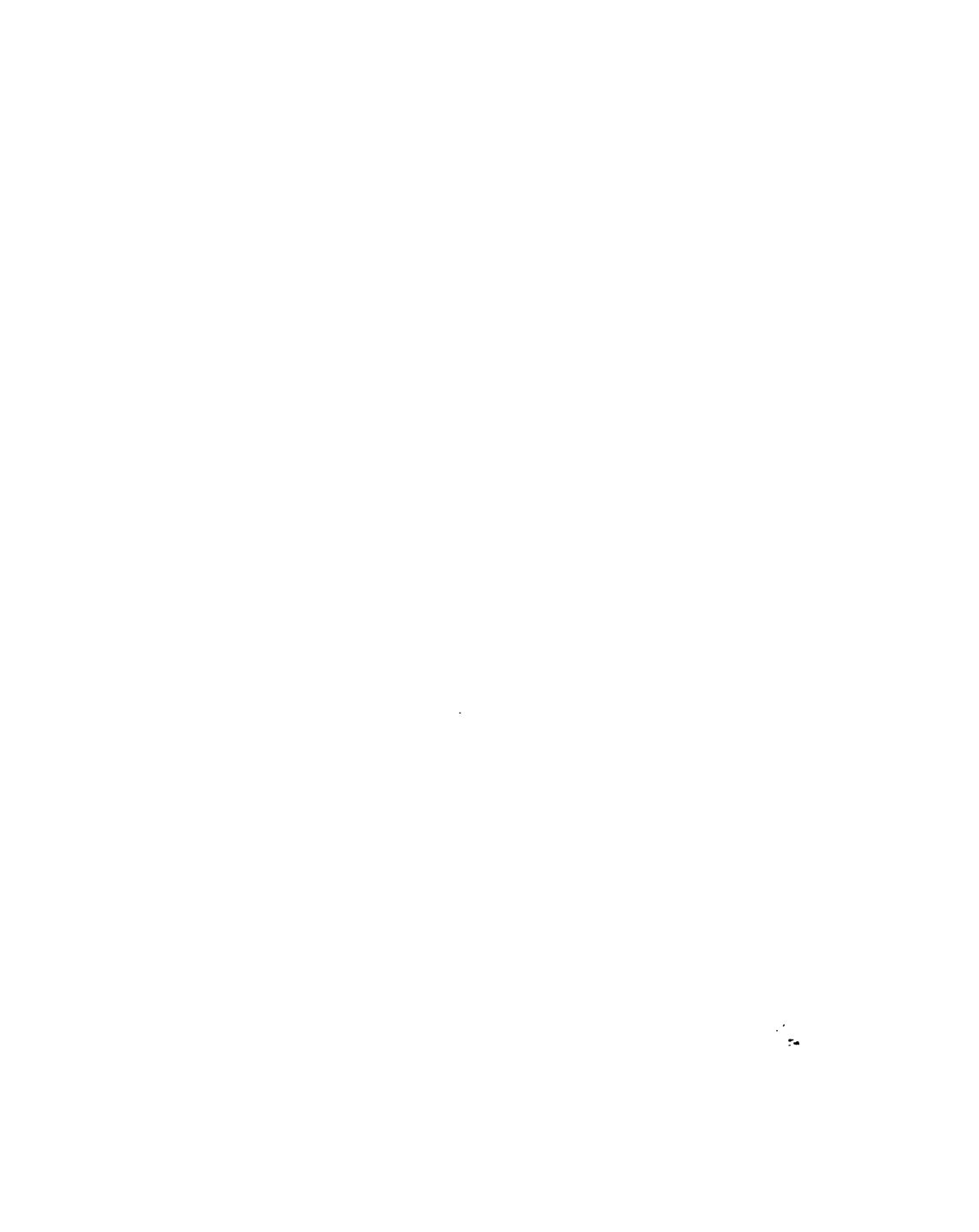
Then every varlet turns to fly.
Nor wait those trait'rous Gall'way men,
But scatter wildly down the glen.
And Edward Bruce and Gilbert Haye
Charge madly down the narrow way,
And quickly gain the river's brae.
With sixty followers stout and brave
They boldly cross the flowing wave,
Whilst some pursue the vanquish'd foe,
And drive them through the glen below.

XXXIV.

The rest around their monarch crowd,
And offer gratulation loud,
As rests the King upon the brae,
He casts his sword and helm away,
And wipes the moisture from his brow,
And pays to God his grateful vow,
Who nerved the Bruce's stalwart arm,
And shielded him from death and harm.
Now gaze we on the slaughter round :
Eleven corpses strew the ground
In varied postures, there they lie,
And grimly stare with glazing eye
All ghastly toward the moonlit sky,
Each in its pool of crimson blood.
Three warriors perish'd in the flood ;
As sank their steeds below the wave,
Together found they wat'ry grave.

On every hand lies martial gear,
With shatter'd mail and broken spear.
Six gallant steeds, the brae beneath,
Lie silent in the sleep of death.
And all around, to left, to right,
Are relics of that bloody fight.
But, heard ye ever, gallants, such a deed of valour
done ?
What think ye of two hundred men discomfited by
one ?

Awhile, brave lords, fair ladies, rest ;
The pause, maybe, shall lend you zest
To gaze upon an alter'd scene,
Where Nature wears her mantle green,
And holds her sway as Nature's Queen.



CANTO III.

1

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO III.

DEDICATED TO

THE COUNTESS OF GALLOWAY.

SAY, lov'st thou, lady fair, to see
The page of ancient history,
To read of glorious days of yore,
And cull the gems from olden lore,
To reap reward from curious store ?
And lov'st thou not the soil to tread
Where Scotland's bravest blood was shed,
To think on days of glory flown,
The name of Scot to proudly own ?
To read how valiant deeds were done,
How gory fields were fought and won,
When Bruce our country strove to free ?
Then, gentle lady, roam with me,
And I will paint thee in my lay
The fairest scenes of Galloway.

Go search the land from south to north,
And wheresoe'er thou roamest forth
Look well around on every side,

Scan each fair scene through Scotland wide.
Then, lady, thy far wanderings o'er,
Thou pausest by the Solway's shore,
And gladly tak'st awhile thy stand
Beside its wild though bonnie strand.
Survey the scene around that lies,
Or to the northward cast thine eyes,
Where gloriously the mountains rise,
And lose their summits in the skies.
With countless beauties nature rare
Combines to make the prospect fair.
Then, lady, with the minstrel say,
"There is no land like Galloway!"

Say, where could nature fairer be
Than by the shores of silv'ry Dee,
Or by the windings of the Cree?
Or where old Criffel guards the sea (A)
That rolls her tide on Solway's strand,
Then backward hastes to Cumberland?
Where air more sweet, or breeze more cool,
Than in the lonely glen of Trool?
Can highland scene more lovely be
Than by the shores of dark loch Dee? *
The Bruce's bard hath wander'd far,
In arctic lands, 'neath tropic star,
Hath gazed upon the classic tide
Of Nile's dark waters flowing wide;
Hath stood on Afric's sunny lea,

* See note A to Canto I.



To face p. 96.

"Can highland scene more lovely be
Than by the shores of dark Loch Dee?"

Introduction to Canto III.

And traced the Danube to the sea,
And through its "iron portals" pass'd
Where madly rush'd the current fast.
Hath stood on Jordan's sacred shore,
And Sinai's desert traversed o'er,
And fair St. Catherine's mount did climb,
Where Moses stood in olden time !
And though he traversed land and sea,
Saw wondrous beauties blooming free,—
Where'er the wanderer chanced to be,
His heart, fair Scotland, turn'd to thee !

How oft, when straying far away,
His thoughts would turn to Galloway !
And oft upon some foreign strand
In dreams he saw his native land.
And happy were those visions bright,
Those fleeting fancies of the night,
When young and gay once more he stood
At home in some sequester'd wood,
And dreams before the mind would raise
Fair forms beloved in other days ;
And paint before his backward view
The early love so loyal, so true ;
The very spot whereon she stood,
The very day, the very wood,
And e'en the blushing damsel's mood,
When, 'neath those happy shades were paid
The lover's vow to lovely maid !
Again is seen the deep blue eye

Ablaze with all love's ecstasy.
And dreams recall each feature's grace,
And once again her figure trace ;
And earth around, and sky above
Are fill'd with peace, for all is love !

No foreign forest e'er shall please
A Scotsman's eye like rowan trees ;
Nor Gallic nor Italian glade
Can charm him like the fir's dark shade ;
Nor Nile nor Danube e'er can be
As fair to him as bonnie Dee.
Nor Rhine nor other alien stream
Can sparkle with as bright a gleam,
Or round his heart such memories bind
As where the Nith's fair waters wind,
Or where old Bladenoch wends his way
To meet the sea in Wigtown Bay ;
Or where, 'neath woods of dark'ning fir (B),
By grey Dalbeattie flows the Urr,
Or by the banks of fairy Luce
We dream of Wallace and of Bruce !

And should thy wand'ring footstep tread
Where lordly Merrick rears his head,
Thou could'st not, lady, find, I ween,
On Scotland's soil a wilder scene,
Where mighty mountains tow'ring vast,
Haphazard in profusion cast,
Show many a quiet glen between,

While lake and river grace the scene ;
For Galloway's wild mountain field
The palm to none shall ever yield.
If homelier beauties to thy mind
More pleasing be, then, lady kind,
Thy roving footsteps homeward turn
Where sweetly by the Penkill burn (c)
Cumloden hides her forest bower,
Where smiles old Garlies' ruined tower,
Or Castle Stewart's ivied side (d),
Sad relic of its former pride.
Yet all such beauties to the eye
Are lovely as we pass them by.
Now as I bid thee fair adieu,
And once again my tale renew,—
Though strath and stream on every side,
Boast glorious scenes, through Scotland wide,—
“For loveliness,” I hear thee say,
“The palm be thine, my Galloway !”

CANTO III.

STANZA I.

WHERE waves above the torrent's bed
The weeping birch her graceful head,
Where shines her stem of silver grey,
Where devious is the rugged way ;
Where greenest grass below one's feet
Affords the roebuck pasture sweet ;
And where the rowan's berries red
Are sweetly clustering over-head ;
Where Scotia's firs, in native pride,
Spread forth their branches far and wide,
Their rugged stems all glorious rise,
And redly stand 'gainst sunny skies ;
Where 'mongst the rocks below they lave
Their twisted rootlets in the wave.
Where in the burn the spotted trout
Beneath the brae darts in and out ;
And where the stately foxglove red,
Nods to the golden broom her head ;
And where earth's fragrance rich and rare,
With sweetness fills the morning air.

Toward the glen, the hills, the skies,
The woods that skirt yon lake around,
The flowers that hide the rocky ground :
Survey the scene ; then say with me,
“ I give, Glen Trool, the palm to thee ! ”

IV.

This glorious scene before our view,
We will our simple tale renew.
And now Apollo's bright'ning rays
Hath pierced the valley's devious ways,
The mountain sides are all ablaze.
A lovely sea of purple heath,
Down stretches to the lake beneath,
And decks it as with bridal wreath.
Eschoncan's aged and hoary head
Rises above that sea of red,
While at the rugged mountain's feet
The lake is bathed in slumber sweet.
Its surface sparkles in the light
With countless wavelets dancing bright.
The grouse-cock crows upon the hill,
The trout are leaping in the rill,
The mountain blackbird * tunes his lay
Of welcome to the opening day.
The wild duck follows close the drake,
And steers her way across the lake,
Her tiny offspring swim around
To seek another feeding ground,

* The ring-ouzel.

The snipe is crouching 'mid the sedge,
The bittern guards the waters' edge,
And yonder alder's whitening leaves
Scarce quiver in the western breeze ;
While stately her'ns as sentry stand,
Or slowly stalk along the strand.
The blackcock struts in lonely state,
The bracken hides his russet mate.
Where leafy boughs give pleasant shade,
And pastures sweet the opening glade,
There you may see the gentle roe
Browsing beside the timid doe.
And butterflies, with colours gay,
Flit brightly 'neath the sunny ray,
And hail with joy returning day.

v.

When Trool's fair water wends its way
From out the parent lake,
It flows through groves with birches gay,
Where forest oaks maintain their sway ;
It leaps o'er boulders torn and grey,
And hastens on 'mid showers of spray
Its rapid course to take.
Its hurried race is quickly o'er,
Its waters lave the Minnock's shore,
And Minnock joins at length the Cree,
Then roll they onward to the sea.
Betwixt the Minnock and the lake,

Toward the glen, the hills, the skies,
The woods that skirt yon lake around,
The flowers that hide the rocky ground :
Survey the scene ; then say with me,
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And Minnock joins at length the Cree,
Then roll they onward to the sea.
Betwixt the Minnock and the lake,

Engirt with fern, and heath, and brake,
 Hard by the water side,
A giant oak uprears its head,
And seems to guard the river's bed,
Spreading its stalwart arms around,
Till here and there they sweep the ground,
 And form an umbrage wide.
Here doth a warrior vigil keep,
Where all around the birches weep,
And as their branches wave aside
He keenly scans the prospect wide,
And glances at the mountains vast,
Then up the glen his looks are cast,
He gazes on each sunny gleam
That dances o'er the rippling stream.
At intervals he lifts his eye
From off the water rushing by,
Searches the distant country far
For sign of England's sons of war.
Right well he knew Earl Pembroke's band
Of Southron "loons" was near at hand.
And mark his ever restless eye,
Like that of falcon soaring high.
Such roving gaze we oft may see
In huntsman coursing o'er the lea,
In stalker of the mountain deer
As to the quarry draws he near,
Or in the soldier's visage rife,
Familiar with the field of strife.

VI.

He is a warrior old, I ween,
But brave as though his youth were green.
Full well can he be blithe and gay,
Though 'neath his helm the locks of grey
 Stream down his shoulders far,
'Tis one of Bruce's patriot band
Who watches by that rugged strand,
And he holds his axe in his stout right hand,
And he wears at his side his trusty brand,
 Well known to border war.
That trusty blade and massive axe
Have levied bloody toll and tax
 On many an angry field.
Full many a knight of fame can tell
How when brave Ronald on them fell,
With mighty strength and fearful yell,
 Down, down went guard and shield.
And oft hath Moorish chieftain felt
That lusty blows so grimly dealt
 Meant death to all around ;
And many an English eye hath seen
The cheek of knight of gallant mien
Grow pale with fear, and think to fly
When first was heard the dreaded cry,
 " Grim Ronald's on the ground."

VII.

His brow is scarr'd by spear and brand,
For once he fought in Holy Land ;
And blows from many an alien hand
 Have been his lot to bear.
But every blow he well repaid,
And many a bloody corpse he made,
 And many an oath he sware,
As swung his mighty axe around,
And struck the Moslem foe to ground.
And Ronald's comrades oft have told,
In camp and hall, of Ronald bold,
When the Crusaders strove to reach
The Holy City through the breach,
 Led by a red-cross knight,
Of how the red-cross heroes fell,
And how the Moslem hordes repel
The Christians from that gate of hell,
 As madly raged the fight ;
Till Ronald strode the corpses o'er,
A banner waving high he bore,
But ever with his stout right hand
He wielded well his bloody brand,
 And dealt out death to all,
Then charging on the heathen band,
Bold Ronald quickly took his stand
 Upon the city wall.
And when the crimson cross waved out
High o'er the breach a mighty shout

Of victory rent the air,
And in the brave Crusaders rush'd,
'Mid curses, groans, and clouds of dust,
And gain'd the heathen lair.
Then was the deed of glory done,
The Holy Citadel was won !

VIII.

Now 'neath the oak by Trool's glad wave,
Stands Ronald Stewart, that warrior brave,
Conceal'd amongst the nodding fern
That grows luxuriant by the burn,
And watching like yon patient her'n,
The south, the east, and west in turn

He scans with eagle eye,
But neither east nor west appear,
Nor south, the gleam of English spear ;
He strains in vain his listening ear :
'Tis silence all ; he naught can hear

But water babbling by.
For here old nature holds her sway
As did she in primeval day,

When hill and glen were made ;
When, at the great Creator's word,
With life the face of nature stirr'd,
When first broke forth the song of bird,
And earliest roar of beast was heard

Resounding through the shade.
And now to while the hours away,
He sings aloud a martial lay,

Toward the glen, the hills, the skies,
The woods that skirt yon lake around,
The flowers that hide the rocky ground :
Survey the scene ; then say with me,
“ I give, Glen Trool, the palm to thee ! ”

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Its rapid course to take.
Its hurried race is quickly o'er,
Its waters lave the Minnock's shore,
And Minnock joins at length the Cree,
Then roll they onward to the sea.
Betwixt the Minnock and the lake,

But hark, what distant sound doth greet
That watcher in his lone retreat

Beside the rocky burn?

Or doth the mountain echo cheat
His ears? Or was it distant bleat
Of shaggy goat on Craigenbae (c),
Calling its young to point the way

How best they may return
From Craigencallie's summit hoar?
Or e'en perchance the savage boar,
The prowling wolf, or mountain fox,
Pursues his way among the rocks;
Perchance the stag's defiant note
Hath sounded from his husky throat,
And glen and mountain echoing round
Distort and change that distant sound.
Or else, mayhap, 'twas eagle's cry,
As soaring in yon azure sky
The bird is lost to human eye,

But earthward floats its voice.

Or croak'd the raven on its way
To distant Cairnsmore's summit grey,
Bearing along the bleeding prey,

To bid its young rejoice?

Or perhaps that sound he heard on high (d)
Was but the gyre-carling's cry?
Mayhap the lordly elk is dashing (e)
The forest through, and grimly crashing
His angry way through briar and brake,
And onward thund'ring toward the lake,

His morning bath to gain ?
Yet Ronald lays an ear to ground,
And lists to catch a passing sound
Of that wild cry in vain.
But now that sound is heard no more,
And silence rests on lake and shore ;
All, all is still as lonely grave,
Except the rippling of the wave
That softly breaks upon the sand
In kisses for that lonely strand.

XI.

But scarcely had old Ronald sought
A calm repose in martial thought
That best can please his warlike brain,
For war is all poor Ronald's aim ;
And scarcely had he careless flung
His sword and axe the fern among,
And scarce his wearied body lain
Amongst the purple heath again,
When Ronald hears that eerie cry
Resounding through the summer sky,
And echoing from the mountain high
It sounds again, and yet once more,
Above the distant torrent's roar,
Where foams the river o'er the ledge,
It echoes near the water's edge.
Bold Ronald knew no thought of fear,
But never on his wondering ear
Had fallen such a sound before ;

And as he cons the matter o'er
He marvels will he need to fight
A spectre grim or goblin sprite?
Perchance 'tis but a Southron foe;
What meaneth, then, that cry of woe?
Debates he long, at length his choice
Decides it is but mortal's voice.

XII.

A hastening step approaching near
Strikes upon Ronald's listening ear.
That watching soldier wondering sees
A woman's figure through the trees.
As draws the stranger on apace,
He sees no lovely maiden's face,
But 'tis a face he knows full well,
And hideous as the fiend of hell.
That grinning hag he oft had seen
Wending her way, when woods were green,
To lonely graves beside the lake,
Men's bones to steal, some charm to make.
And how 'twas said, full well he knew
That if the dreaded witch-wife threw
Her curses on a traveller's head
He soon would lie on dying bed,
Or if she blasted ship from shore
That vessel would return no more,
But if she bless'd a warrior's son,
The victory would soon be won!

Now, passing 'neath the Druids' tree,
She onward strides, foul sight to see—
The witch-wife of Loch Ochiltree (F),
And as she sees the warrior there
She mumbles many a mutter'd prayer,
And shakes her locks of tangled hair,
As on a rock she silent stands,
Then sudden lifts her bony hands
And skinny arms toward the sky,
And then again that eerie cry
Rings shrilly out on Ronald's ear,
Who marvels what she listeth here.
But to her side he wends his way,
And quickly Ronald says his say,
And asks her can he be of use,
Or doth she seek the royal Bruce?

XIII.

She quickly tells, with stifed groans,
And strangely weird unnatural moans,
How, as she stray'd by Minnock's shore
Yest're'en, the English varlets bore
Her little god-child far away ;
And how she search'd till break of day,
Until their camp she chanced to find ;
How thoughts of vengeance fill'd her mind ;
And when she saw their numbers few,
Her hostile plans she quickly drew ;
Then swiftly sped her to the glen,

To seek for Bruce's valiant men ;
And how King Robert soon should see
The English camp beside the Cree,
For she will show the Bruce the way
To where the loons unguarded lay,
And how the King of Scotland may
Drive all his foes to Wigtown Bay,
And sink their bodies in the sea,
Or slay them on the banks of Cree !
His post stout Ronald may not leave
Till lowly sinks the sun at eve,
So to the witch-wife's eager ken
He points the way towards the glen
Where she may find the Bruce's men.
And as she onward took her way,
He hums again a martial lay.
At intervals her dreary cry,
Ascending sadly to the sky,
Comes floating back on Ronald's ear
And wonder fills the forest deer.
Up starts the roebuck from the brake
That grows beside the placid lake,
And e'en the lordly elk his head
Uprears from off his mossy bed.

XIV.

King Robert heard the distant sound,
Loud growl'd with rage each shaggy hound,
His followers grasp the ready arm,
And marvel at the fresh alarm.

With sword in hand and axe and bill
They muster on the heathery hill.
But unattended Robert goes :
He fears no treason from his foes,—
No Southron knave could gain the glen
Unseen by one of Bruce's men ;
And Ronald Stewart guards the way,
So none can pass by night or day.
Hurries the monarch from his cave,
And seeks the lake's romantic wave,
And meets the witch-wife by the pool
Of alders near the head of Trool.
Now bows the hag toward the ground
For joy she hath King Robert found,
And then she tells the Bruce her name—
Not all unknown to Scotland's fame—
Her neighbours call her Grizell Graem.
How by Loch Ochiltree she dwells :
Slowly the hag her story tells,
With curses low and mutter'd prayer,
What brought her to her monarch there.
How glares her keen but sunken eye
As lifts she both her hands on high,
And then looks upward to the sky,
And swears that when at early dawn
She heard the foeman's mustering horn,
She swiftly hasten'd up the glen
In search of valiant Bruce's men,—
Declares she comes the truth to tell,
“ For, faith ! she loves her monarch well ! ”

XV.

When Grizell Graem has had her say,
A soldier leads the hag away,
And takes her struggling up the hill,
For troth she goes against her will ;
She begs the King to grant her leave
To wend her home before the eve.
But Gilbert Haye, who standing near
Had whisper'd in King Robert's ear,
An order to the soldier gave
To take old Grizell to the cave,
And keep her safely 'neath his eye,
And bind her, should she dare to fly.
Now 'cross the lake comes swiftly o'er
A boat from off the further shore,
And in it sits a lovely maid,
In simple lowland garb array'd :
A silver-mounted bugle horn
Was o'er her shoulder gaily worn,
And on her head a bonnet blue
Confined her locks of golden hue.
Beside her in the boat were laid
Her bow, her arrows, and her plaid,
And as she lightly leapt to land,
And drew the shallop up the strand,
Edward his royal brother told,
" Yon maiden with those locks of gold
Doth hail from loyal Garlies' tower,
For well he knew this forest flower."

Then Edward Bruce and Malcolm Haye
Haste quickly to the shore away,
Receive the maid with jealous care,
And to her royal message bear,
Whereby the King doth humbly crave
Her presence in the royal cave :—
“The mountain home of Robert Bruce
Would e’en be honoured by her use.”

XVI.

While in the cave the feast was spread,
While mirth was high and wine ran red,
While loud the laughter echoed round,
When Lady Alice Graem had found
In Marg’ret Stewart a friend of youth,
Desired the King to learn the truth,
Why Lady Margaret left her bower,
Why wander’d she from Garlies’ tower?
Though, by his faith, he loved to see
A lady fair, of high degree,
And when she wish’d his cheer to share,
She would be ever welcome there.
Replying to the King’s request,
Fair Margaret tells with loyal zest
How Grizell Graem with lying tongue
Had been the English foe among.
And how ’twas known Earl Pembroke * bold
By silver won the witch-wife old
To draw King Robert from the glen,

* See note H to Canto II.

When fifteen hundred valiant men,
The pick of all the Southron force
Would on him fall with foot and horse.
And how could Bruce's patriot band
Against the numerous foemen stand?

XVII.

"Now, lady, by my royal word
And by the feelings thou hast stirr'd
Within my breast, the witch hath err'd.
But many a hero hath been sold,
And many a glorious patriot bold,
And many a life for love of gold
Ere now hath pass'd away.
Then shall the Bruce his vengeance take,
Example of a woman make,
And drown the witch-wife in the lake?

Nay! gentle lady, nay!
I would not be like England's king,
And on my name dishonour bring!
When rings the Bruce's bugle horn
Upon the hills to-morrow morn,
That lying hag shall surely be
Again beside the shores of Cree,
Back to De Valance shall she go,
And bear our message to the foe,
That Bruce, with his three hundred men,
Awaits his coming in the glen.
And come they soon, or come they late,

They there shall meet the invader's fate.
And if the English venture here,
We give them, ladies, royal cheer ! ”

XVIII.

A warrior then the monarch sends,
Who with the witch-wife swiftly wends
His way to Minnock's rocky shore,
And helps her wade the river o'er.
Then where the English army lay
Alone she sought her rapid way,
And to the gallant Pembroke bold
How few were with the Bruce she told,
And if to Trool he swiftly sped
He might obtain the traitor's head.—
“ How can that puny monarch boast ?
How dare defy Lord Pembroke's host ?
How could he hope to hold the glen,
With bare two hundred mountain men,
Against that gallant English band ?
'Gainst southern bow and English brand ?
'Gainst many a knight who trod the strand
Of battle in the Holy Land ?
When Clifford lets his archers loose,
Short be the shrift of outlaw'd Bruce !
When trump and drum resounding far,
And all the pomp of southern war,
Go echoing up the lonely glen,
'Twill doom to death the Bruce's men ! ”

Old Grizell's speech Lord Pembroke hears,
And falls it bravely on his ears.
He with his leaders counsel holds,
And ere the gloom of evening folds
The English camp with misty veil,
Their plans are form'd, and each detail
With thoughtful care is wisely laid,
And all their converse bravely made
Of how the victory shall be won
Ere on the morrow sets the sun.

XIX.

When Grizell left the patriot's cave,
How pass'd the time those warriors brave ?
Did they the royal feast prolong ?
Cheer'd they the eve with joyous song ?
Or danced the maids their favourite reels
While loud the merry music peals ?
Lasted the revel till the light
Of morn dispell'd the murk of night ?
Ah ! no, far other task employs
The patriot's hand than festive joys,
Far more the warrior's noble art
Than pleasure fills each northern heart !
As evening shadows gathering round
Are cast upon that rocky ground,
Three hundred men stand muster'd there,
With Bruce and with those damsels fair :
And all that gallant loyal band,

With bill and sword and axe in hand,
Betake their way, as falls the night,
To grim Muldonnoch's lofty height,
That overlooks the deepest pool
Far, far below, of bonnie Trool.
Three hundred warriors arm'd for fight,
Toil'd bravely through that summer night.
Three hundred mighty granite blocks (c)
Are loosen'd from their parent rocks,
With stalwart arms and iron bars
They toil beneath the twinkling stars.
When o'er the scene the moon doth shine,
Of massive boulders many a line
Is rear'd upon Muldonnoch's crest,
Or poised upon its rugged breast,
And ready for the morning light
To usher in the coming fight.
Though each upon their pivots rest,
A stranger glancing up had guess'd
That nought disturb'd the mountain's breast.
The Bruce surveys the work with care
The deadly trap to well prepare,
And many a loyal Scottish air
To cheer the workers toiling there
The Lady Alice Graem doth sing,
And through the night rude voices ring
A lusty chorus to her song,
Which echoing loud the hills prolong.

XX.

The snare is baited : all is done,
Ere in the east appear'd the sun,
Then called the King his followers bold,
The plan of fight to each he told,
How they will on Muldonnoch wait
While ride the foe toward their fate ;
How he to other vantage ground,
Whence he can scan the country round,
Would wend his way, so he may view
The coming of the Southron crew.
Then bless'd the King his warriors brave,
And to them parting mandate gave :
" Our royal orders now obey,
So that the Bruce may win the day !
When first ye hear our bugle horn
Awake the silence of the morn,
Then shall ye know our searching eye
The squadrons of the foe can spy.
Then grasp each brother by the hand,
And swear to free our bonnie land
From English Edward's hated yoke,
And see our tyrant fetters broke !
Who would not love his native land,
Would not defend her cherish'd strand
 Whene'er occasion came,
When hearth and home and every band
Unite her children hand in hand
 To die for Scotland's fame ?

Who would not love the purple heath?
Who doth not love the scented breath
From fir and birch and rowan trees,
That floats upon the summer breeze
 From woods on every hand?
Where branches shield the sun's hot ray
The roebuck doth his doe survey,
While round the pair their offspring play,
 Or list'ning silent stand?
If so ye think,—the varlets slay!
With corpses bar the invaders' way,
And fill the windings of the glen
With mangled heaps of Pembroke's men!"

XXI.

"When next aloud the bugle blast
(The second time but not the last)
Is wafted past your listening ears,
Then learn that nearer come the spears,
And know ye that the foremost foe
Hath reach'd the lake of Trool below,
Think then of Scotia's days of fame,
And times of olden glory name,
And dream ye of her ancient kings,
While yet the bugle echoing rings,
And lift ye all your eyes on high,
And pray to conquer or to die.
Make once again your children free,
And fight for them, and think on me!"

Crouch low beside each tottering rock,
Be ready for that awful shock,
When ye, my trusty Carrick men (H),
Shall hurl the mountain down the glen !
And, royal brother, thine the care
No sign of this our deadly snare
Can meet the searching eye below,
When toward the lake approach the foe ;
See ne'er a follower's bonnet blue
Contrasts the heather's russet hue.
Let knife, and bow, and shaft be laid
Amid the verdant bracken's shade ;
Your ready pikes be all conceal'd,
And hidden every warrior's shield :
Let ne'er a naked weapon's gleam
Be dancing in some sunny beam,
And glitter on the mountain side,
And warn the foemen as they ride,
A gallant gay and warlike band,
Along Trool's fair but deadly strand !
And make each soldier lowly crouch,
Or lie full-length on heathy couch.
Be sure that not a point of lance
May shining meet their upward glance ;
But silence as the depth profound
Of ocean cave must reign around,
So naught but granite, heath, and sky
Be there to meet the enquiring eye."

XXII.

“ With bray of trump and beat of drum,
I would my lord of Pembroke come
 To taste our Scottish cheer.
For if he pierce our lone retreat,
And dare once more the Bruce to greet,
By good Saint Andrew he shall meet
 A royal welcome here !
Reproach 'twould be upon our name
Did we not greet the gallant Vane (1)
 With martial pomp and pride !
Their welcome with my bugle horn
Shall wake the echoes of the morn,
And e'en the rocks shall cry aloud
In welcome to those warriors proud,
 When up the glen they ride.
But when ye hear the third blast sound,
Then make ye all the rocks rebound,
 And give your welcome then !
For by my soul, such kingly cheer
As they receive who venture here,
 They scarce shall wish again !
For grace before the banquet's spread
They'll hear resounding over head
 The slogan's deadly yell (J).
For priest the benison to say,
The Bruce shall wind his bugle gay
 On fair Eschoncan's fell.
And at the Bruce's mountain meal

They'll learn the taste of Scottish steel.
Nor shall the varlets want for wine,
Though 'tis not press'd from Gallic vine,
Nor trod by foot of Spanish maids,
Nor from Italia's sunny glades.
Our liquor here, both white and red,
Is made in ghastly form and dread :
'Tis brew'd, in sooth, of southern gore,
And they who drink it, drink no more !
But they shall quaff, and deeply too,
Nor shall they lack the ruddy hue,
But take it from the swirling pool
As sink they 'neath the waves of Trool,
When mixes with the crystal flood
The English yeoman's crimson blood !"

XXIII.

When once again the sun rose high,
When sought the lark the azure sky,
When mists of night were rising still,
From Trool to grim Muldonnoch's hill,
Then Robert Bruce, and Gilbert Haye,
And Malcolm took their hasty way
Across the bosom of the lake,
And upward climb'd 'mid heath and brake
To fair Eschoncan's lofty crest,
Whence gazed they on Muldonnoch's breast,
Studded with many a massive rock,
And many a towering granite block

Which grimly guard the glen below,
And wait the coming of the foe.
And Lady Alice Graem is there,
And Margaret Stewart, gay and fair,
In silence sits beside the King,
While gaily round the ouzels sing.
Their maidens rest amongst the brake,
And gaze upon the quiet lake,
That sweetly sleeping far below
Shone in the sunlight's early glow.
But when across the lake they cast
Their eyes, they saw but boulders vast,
Where now the northern warriors lurk,
All eager for their deadly work.
But all around the song of bird
This summer morn is blithely heard.
Old nature guards the lovely vale,
And holds her sway o'er hill and dale.
How sad such happy scene as this,
Where all is steep'd in perfect bliss,
So soon should be a field of strife,
With human passion fiercely rife ;
That all too soon the limpid flood
Of fair loch Trool be stain'd with blood,
And while man's anger holds its sway,
God's creatures haste in fear away !

XXIV.

While still the early sunbeams rest
Upon Eschoncan's highest crest,
Ere melts beneath its rays the dew,
Appear'd upon the Bruce's view
The English army far away,
But onward marching, brave and gay.
The summer sun in golden sheen,
Shone down upon that warlike stream,
As nearer still the foeman drew
More gallant from the hill the view.
Such sight, I trow, had fired the heart
Of him who loves the warrior's art,
Of him who loves the war-horse tramp,
Who loves to dwell in tented camp !—
Would quit a peaceful dwelling for
The glorious panoply of war !
Who well could charge with streaming crest,
Who foremost in the battle press'd ;
Would please who loves, like Bruce, to see
The gallant pride of chivalry.
He watch'd from off his 'vantage rock,
(Which soon shall hear the battle shock,)
The unsuspecting foemen come,
With flare of trump and beat of drum,
With England's banner flaunting high,
An insult to the northern sky !
But soon Saint Andrew's cross shall wave
Victorious o'er the Southron's grave !

The army like some monster snake
Slow winds its way toward the lake,
Fold after fold appearing still,
As creeps a serpent up the hill.

XXV.

But hark ! a blast both loud and clear
Falls on Lord Pembroke's listening ear ;
With bugle horn each mountain rings,
And countless answers echo brings.
As pressing on the soldiers crowd,
The haughty Pembroke cries aloud,
" That bugle blast full well I know
Is blown by Bruce, our mortal foe :
Press on, press on, my trusty men,
And hasten from this loathsome glen !
I would that traitor king espy,
And make the rebel yield or die.
And when the Scottish knave be dead,
Our courier, with the traitor's head,
Shall post full speed to fair Carlisle,
Where will the bloody gift beguile
Our good King Edward's hours of pain (κ),
And prove that traitors strive in vain.
Then shall our praises loudly ring,
Of Pembroke every bard shall sing !
Then shall be raised, all ghastly red,
On naked pike the traitor's head ;
His fate a lesson grim shall be

O'er Carlisle gate for all to see ! (L)
A princely sum, my merry men, we set upon his
head,
A thousand crowns to him who takes the Bruce
alive or dead !”
Now every knight uplifts his hand,
And every warrior bares his brand,
And every soldier lifts his bill,
And every archer on the hill
His bow prepares for use.
A mighty shout goes up on high,
And wakes the echoes in the sky ;
The startled fowl flit screaming by,
And thrice five hundred voices cry
“ Death ! death ! to Robert Bruce ! ”

XXVI.

My faith ! but 'twas a glorious sight
As Bruce from off the mountain height,
Conceal'd from English ken,
Survey'd the foe with fierce delight,
As thought he on the woeful plight
Would 'fall them in the glen.
Full well he knew the dappled horse
Of him who led that valiant force
Of fifteen hundred men.
Full well he knew his helm and crest,
That oft in foremost rank had prest
On many a bloody field.

And then Saint George's cross he saw
Borne stately 'mid the ranks of war,
 On banner as on shield.
A patriot light shone in his eye,
And Lady Margaret hears him cry,
"The northern eagle may disgorge,
But good Saint Andrew to Saint George
 The Bruce will never yield!"
He sees below Lord Clifford ride,
Of Cumberland the flower and pride;
While close beside him gallant Vane
His charger spurs, and plies his rein,
The entrance of the glen to gain.
And many a stalwart knight is there,
And many a pennon floating fair.
And two by two the horsemen gay
Press onward up the narrow way,
While archers breast the mountain side,
And safety for the flanks provide,
The southern horsemen proudly ride,
Their streaming banners floating wide
 In serried ranks beneath.
While clouds of men, with pike and bill,
Hover behind them on the hill,
 Half hid amongst the heath.

XXVII.

But still more narrow grows the way,
And winds beside a quiet bay.

Now onward press the knights amain,
When ringing o'er the hills again
Once more the King his bugle blows,
And strikes fresh terror on his foes.
From all the vanguard rose a cry,
"The Bruce ! the Bruce !" And every eye
Was turn'd toward the northern sky,
From whence appear'd to sound the blast
That on the breeze went floating past.
But though their eyes could sweep the glen,
No sign of Bruce or Bruce's men
Could Clifford or De Valance spy,
But rock and heather met their eye,
And clumps of fern and boulders rude,
As well became that solitude.
But still the Southrons may not know
What doom awaits them : on they go.
For what shall hap to make them stay ?
And who may dare to bar their way ?
The horsemen two abreast march on
Until the steps of Trool they won (M).
The archers now must quit the flanks,
And join in rear the English ranks.
The battle surging round the lake
Shall soon the mountain echoes wake.
And now no longer side by side
Along the path the horsemen ride ;
In single file they forward strain,
And stoutly press they on again.

XXVIII.

And looking on Muldonnoch's height
The Bruce surveys a wondrous sight.
Beside each mighty granite rock—
Stand waiting there his gallant men,
Who may withstand the awful shock
When rolls the mountain down the glen?—
Now gleams with fire each patriot's eye,
And patriot hearts are beating high,
As once again the mountains vast
Re-echo to the bugle's blast !
A fearful shout at once is heard,
And greets the ears of beast and bird.
Muldonoch's side doth heave and quake,
The very earth appears to shake :
And fragments fill the air on high,
And clouds of dust the summer sky !
Quick starts the dipper from his rest ;
Quick swims the diver from her nest
Upon her rushy islet lone :
The osprey from his rock hath flown :
The falcon courses through the sky :
The buzzard's voice resounds on high.
Listens the wild boar in his lair,
And listening sits the silent hare.
All wondering stands the gentle roe
The cause of this turmoil to know.
The mountain fox his slumber breaks,
And in his den the wolf awakes.

And deeper in the forest shade,
Where owls sit dreaming by the glade,
Birds scream and chatter at the sound
That fills the woods for miles around,
And marvel at the din of war
That echoes o'er the hills afar.

XXIX.

Down, down upon that fated band,
Like angry ocean on the strand,
Or whirlwind o'er the desert sand,
 The mighty mountain rolls !
A yell of fear ascends on high,
And prayers for mercy rend the sky,
Alas ! no human aid is nigh,
 Ye poor, predestined souls !
Now awful curses fill the air,
And all around is wild despair,
And they who lead that gallant van
Press madly forward, horse and man ;
And urge their steeds with spur and rein
The entrance of the pass to gain.
While some to turn their chargers strive,
And some to gain the lake contrive,
And through the waters swim or dive.
Now England's warriors in the glen,—
A host of panic-stricken men,—
Look upward with despairing eye,
And see there is no time to fly ;

What may they do but bravely die?
And yet 'tis hard to perish so,
To part with life without a blow !

XXX.

Far louder than the deafening roar
Of torrent swollen wide,
Far swifter than the squadrons pour,
As charge they in their pride,
As whirlwinds sweep the moorland o'er,
So, with gigantic stride,
Speeds downward, leaping t'ward the shore,
The very mountain side !
Down, down the massive boulders go
Toward the path, far, far below,
Where squire and knight still proudly ride,
And strive their prancing steeds to guide
In safety by that devious way.
Alas ! poor souls, an easy prey
To Bruce, who watches from above
The avalanche upon you move.
Now all is terror by the wave,
And none are there to help or save !
"Onward !" the foremost soldiers cry,
"Ride back !" the knights in rear reply.
Warriors, alas ! too late ! too late !
The invader meets his destined fate !
Down must ye sink beneath the wave,
And find in Trool your silent grave !

Down, down, must horse and horsemen go,
As Scotland triumphs o'er her foe !

XXXI.

Down, down ! those awful boulders grey
Have thunder'd to the narrow way,
And on the foe their vengeance take,
And crush or hurl them in the lake
Whose waters yield them to the blow,
As sink they to the depth below !
The quiet lake is fury lash'd,
Its sparkling waters high are dash'd,
The sun above 'mid showers of spray
In rainbow colours paints his ray.
And all around the streaming blood
Is mingling with the limpid flood,
'Midst piercing yell and dying groan,
And shouts of hate and drowning moan.
Ye heavens ! what a ghastly strife
Of human passions fiercely rife !
The frightened chargers upward rear,
For you, poor steeds, no help is near,
And gallant horses soon or late
May meet in war the warrior's fate.
But deem me not like woman weak
If rests the tear upon my cheek,
And sorrow dims my eye,
Whene'er a favourite steed hath pass'd
His life's short span, and o'er him fast

The shadows of the grave are cast,
And he lies down to die.
Then well I know my steed no more
Shall skim the verdant pastures o'er,
No more shall hear with joy the sound
Of hunter's horn and cry of hound,
Nor charge where gory fields are won.
Poor gallant horse ! his race is run !
And when he heaves his dying sigh,
And gently turns his faithful eye
To mine, as though he wish'd to say,
" Adieu, dear Master, and for aye."—
'Tis then I feel my heart would break
In honest sorrow for his sake,
And all my wealth I'd freely give
If once again that steed might live,
And bend him to the yielding rein,
While yet once more we scour the plain.

XXXII.

But what of Bruce's val'rous band,—
Still do they on Muldonnoch stand,
And watch the scene of blood beneath ?
Nay, down they speed o'er rock and heath,
Soon as they hasted on its way
The avalanche upon the prey.
Now rush those warriors down below,
And hurl themselves upon the foe
With shouts of rage and savage yell,

And cries that of the victory tell,
And swift pursue Lord Pembroke's men,
Who speed in terror down the glen.
The few who are alive to flee
Are spurring madly toward the Cree.
But hark ! of fear another cry
In rear goes upward to the sky,
And faster still the Southrons fly :
And what fresh foemen hotly pour
With rush as of the torrent's roar
 Upon the English flanks ?
Those horsemen issued from the wood,
Where well conceal'd they silent stood,
 Hid from the southern ranks,
When march'd their army up the glen :
But few shall see the Cree again !
Brave Edward's band of horsemen true
Burst from the wood in numbers few,
But press'd they on their flying foes,
Down many an archer lifeless goes,
And many a Scottish patriot's brand
Well wielded by accustom'd hand,
Took speedy vengeance as it pass'd
On those who, breathless, loiter'd last.
Well do the northern horsemen know—
However brave or fierce the foe,—
No knight could win that mountain glen,
Nor one of all Lord Pembroke's men
 Could pierce their phalanx through.
For who may brook Lord Edward's charge,

Am. Mus. Nov. 1941

1941
The people of the world are now
in a state of confusion and
uncertainty. The world is in a
state of confusion and uncertainty.





To face p. 141.

“While in fair Trool’s romantic glen
The vict’ry shout of Bruce’s men,”
Was loudly ringing far and wide.”

Canto III., Stanza xxxviii.

Of what avail is English targe
 'Gainst lance of Scottish yew?
Nor steel cuirass, nor coat of mail,
May brook grim Edward's first assail!

XXXIII.

How fared that gallant army now,
And how hath Pembroke kept his vow
To take the Bruce alive or dead,
And send his king the patriot's head?
That army scant asylum found
Amongst the thick'ning woods around,
Fell many on the banks of Cree,
Some struggled onward to the sea,
And some to England sped their way,
Some gave their lives by Wigtown Bay,
While in fair Trool's romantic glen
The vict'ry shout of Bruce's men
Was loudly ringing far and wide
Till on the passing breeze it died,
But only to be heard again
As joy the conqu'rors o'er the slain;
And yet once more that victor shout
Upon the ear peals grandly out.
In every crevice wild it rings,
And countless answers quickly brings;
And loud the notes of triumph swell,
And echo far o'er wild Caignell.
It sounded from Cairngarroch high,

And grim Cragnelder sent reply ;
It came from Craigencallie's height,
Where lonely sat the brooding kite.
That mighty shout of victory told,
As wildly up the glen it roll'd,
And on to lone Loch Dee ;
Whose wavelets round her lovely shore,
The notes of triumph onward bore,
And danced and leapt for glee !
And onward still through Buchan's shades,
O'er mountains bare, through verdant glades,
The news of Bruce's victory went,
By favouring breezes onward sent !

CANTO IV.

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO IV.

DEDICATED TO

THE COUNTESS OF SELKIRK.

By mountain wild, by stream and sea,
Oh ! wander, lady fair, with me !
And I will show thee many a glen
Far distant from the haunts of men ;
Where broom is golden, heather red,
The bluebell rears its lovely head,
And where the thick'ning boughs above
A shelter give the gentle dove,
Where birds' glad voices fill the air,
And wild flowers shed their fragrance rare.
The course we'll trace of Ken and Dee,
From hills of Ayr to Solway's sea.
And many a gem shall please thine eye
As each glad scene in turn glides by,
'Mid nature's glimpses wild and rare,
For Galloway is passing fair.

Our wand'ring way we'll gaily take
By placid Ken's romantic lake ;

The landscape round is fair and sweet,
Where Ken and Dee together meet.
All verdant is the flow'ry lea
By Michael's Cross and Balmaghie.
While openings in the woods reveal
The wild fantastic hill of Screel ;
And, crested by its rocky cairn,
Lies close beside the high Bengairn.
We'll dream of Douglas as we leave (A)
The lonely tower of ancient Threave,
And seawards with the river wind
Till Tongueland's bridge is left behind (B),
Where the first Edward's health was drunk
In olden time by prior and monk.
And quit we then the silver Dee,
Where its bright waters flowing free
Glide on to meet the advancing sea ;
Past old Kirkcudbright's ivied tower,
I'll leave thee in thy favourite bower,
And bid thee rest, with grateful smile (C),
In sweet Saint Mary's lovely isle.

* * * * *

When summer's bright and azure sky
Is streak'd by ne'er a cloud ;
And sweet Carsphairn nestles nigh
The Deugh, that flows so gently by,
And curlews circle round on high,
And whistle clear and loud,
Then rest a while, and scan the scene.

In yonder fields so rich and green
 The cattle basking lie :
Yon heights are clad in heathy sheen,
And countless burns with silver gleam
 Gladden the straining eye.
What varying sights these mountains bold
Have look'd upon, in days of old !
For 'neath the sod are many laid
Who, man or matron, boy or maid,
 Here happ'ly dwelt for years.
Secure, and free from border raid,
Their reels they danced with lightsome tread,
 Nor thought they then of tears !
But they are gone. Their offspring now
People the smiling plain below
 Their sires had loved so well.
And as the strangers come and go,
Full many a one hath marvell'd how
 A shepherd here can dwell !
For lonely 'tis : indeed, the eye
Meets nought but mountains tow'ring high
 Where clouds each other chase,
That with the wild birds seem to vie
Who first shall reach the azure sky,
 Or lose themselves in space.

Look we on scenes their fathers saw,
Those distant precipices hoar
Are just as fearsome as of yore,
 And quite as steep and grey.

And still the eagles proudly soar,
Scanning each glen and hillside o'er,
Watching in search of prey.
And still we see the roedeer come,
As from the woods they sportive run
And onward wend their silent way,
When slowly with expiring ray
Amidst the Kells the sinking sun (D),
Its shadows o'er the mountains flung,
Proclaims the closing of the light,
And heralds in the coming night.

There Cairnsmore still gigantic stands (E);
Its cairn, though piled by human hands
In ages long bygone,
Looks weird, and hasty prayer demands
From any wild marauding bands
Who thither chance to roam,
For shepherds oft lost life and way
Among those massive boulders grey,
Where white grouse once in safety lay,
And where, secure from sleuth-hound's bay,
The foxes make their home.
And yonder seaward flows the Deugh,
That cleaves the purple valley through.
Far past Marscalloch's mountain see,
Above the pine trees round Glenlee,
Crown'd with a blue cloud-wreath,
A pointed summit fair to see,—
The famous "Black Craig o' the Dee" (F),

That guards the stream beneath,
Which dark and sullen swiftly creeps,
Where willows wave o'er wat'ry deeps,
Past many a dark'ning lea,
And then with quaint, fantastic sweeps,
O'er mighty rocks unbridled leaps,
It thunders toward the sea,
And past Dalshangan and Dun-deugh
Spreads softly out in fairer view (G)
The lovely vale of Ken,
Engirt with mountains gaunt and high,
Where o'er the rocks the breezes sigh,
Where oft is heard the plover's cry,
And russet-plumaged moorfowl fly
Far from the haunts of men.

But if we leave these mountains wild,
Full many a rosy labourer's child,
With countenance serene,
We'll meet with as our way we take
O'er moss and fell, through briar and brake,
To view a homely scene.
Hemm'd in by cottage gardens neat,
A long and straight old-fashioned street,
Where plays the summer breeze,
Environ'd sweet by many a hill,
New Galloway there nestles still,
Half hid amongst the trees.
And further on the turrets high
Of Kenmure Castle meet the eye,

And 'gainst the sky stand clear,
And looking o'er the lime tree tops,
One wonders, if one loudly knocks
A warder would appear !

No, gentle dame ; those days are past
When the portcullis gloomy cast
Around its shadow drear.
No sentinels the courtyard tread,
No banner proudly floats o'erhead,
No hounds the sleepers wake.
No beacon casts its ruddy light
From off the watch tower's giddy height,
Reflected in the lake.
We never more shall see the day
When Kenmure's powers in bright array,
To battle issue forth.
For Gordon's men were widely known
And fear'd in many a mountain home,
East, south, and west and north !

No knights hold revel in the halls,
Nor use the armour on the walls
That glanced in many a fight.
Those ancient swords, all rusty now,
Fell "dour" * on many a southern "pow" †
In days when might was right.
When cross'd the Solway's yellow strand
Full many a Scotch marauding band

* Hard.

† Head.

To "lift the English kye." *
Victorious oft,—if put to rout,
They northward turn'd their steeds about,
And though they fly, their battle shout
Upon the air rings loudly out,
"No Gordon fears to die!"

Then climb we now grey Bennan's side (H),
And view a panorama wide
 North, south, and left and right,
Beneath our feet, far far below
Loch Ken's fair bosom seems to glow
 And sparkle in the light.
Beyond the lakes are fields of corn,
And many a farm whose verdant lawn
 Touches the shelving shore.
And gently sweeping hills above,
Where still the sportsman loves to rove
 And search the heather o'er.
Strange sights yon mountain view'd, I ween,
When glitt'ring bright in armour's sheen
 The Southrons came from far.
And all around fair memory teems,
With Bruce and Douglas, patriot themes;
On Lowran's braes one fondly dreams
 Of young lord Lochinvar (I) !
Now to the northward cast your eyes,
And fairer scene you'd scarce devise,
 E'en with magician's aid !

* To "capture the English cattle."

Yon mountains where the breezes mourn,
Whose fissured sides all waterworn,
And mighty crests by whirlwinds torn,

The Bruce hath oft survey'd.

While, toward the south, where fields are green,
Gladdens the eye a sweeter scene,
And pastures dot the prospect o'er,
Far stretching to the Solway's shore,
And bring to mind brave days of yore,

When, foremost in the fight,
The grim Black Douglas scour'd the plain;
And Edward Bruce, his charger's rein (J)

Check'd by yon rocky height.
And as he scann'd the country o'er,
His royal brother Edward swore
Should o'er this lovely district reign
When Scotland won her own again.

But now descend we to the vale,
And once again resume our tale.

CANTO IV.

STANZA I.

THE wintry night was closing round
 The fairy lake of Ken,
A snow-white mantle clothed the ground,
The frosty shore was iron bound ;
 The wild fowl sought the fen.
And Kenmure's Castle proudly stood (A)
As guardian o'er the neighbouring wood,
All peaceful on a rising mound,
As if she knew no martial sound,
 Nor tramp of arming men.
And 'gainst the sky shone full and clear
The sentinel with bow and spear,
As gazed he on the distant hill,
Or spoke the challenge loud and shrill.
And on its turrets worn and grey
The pale sweet moon had shed her ray,
As daylight's beauties fled away.
Yet moans the wintry wind on high,
And fleeting through the angry sky

The hurrying clouds each other chase,
And through the heavens seem to race.
As often hid the moon her face,
At intervals when waned the light,
A sombre darkness veil'd the night.

II.

But when the moon shone forth once more,
Then brightly gleam'd the frosty shore,
And strangely grim the oak trees stood
Like spectres in the leafless wood.
And yonder boulders scatter'd round
Seem'd monster creatures on the ground ;
And blasted firs and ancient thorns
Seem'd all possess'd of heads and horns,
As in the moonlight waved each limb
Appear'd like phantoms foul and grim,
And yonder row of giant elms
A rank of knights with waving helms,
As stretch'd they each a trembling arm
To shield the castle from alarm :
And many a league that Castle round
Was strangely weird, fantastic ground.
Again the moon obscures her light,
Once more the scene is murky night.
Colder and stronger blows the breeze,
And fiercely swirls among the trees.
It sweeps o'er Lowran's rocky brae,
And scatters from the linn * the spray,

* A cascade.

And shivers o'er the mountain rill,
And stirs the copse on Bennan's hill.
Though fierce the blast on Kenmure's wall,
As madly raves the wintry squall,
It may not harm those turrets tall,
Nor sweep the sumptuous banquet hall.
It howls around the outer gate,
Where wakeful warders watch and wait ;
It eddies round the dungeon tower,
And storms upon the maiden's bower.
And now the tempest's sullen roar
Is borne above the mountains hoar,
And shakes the castle to its core,
And beats on casement, tower, and door,
As gust on gust sweeps wildly past,
And bears the snow-drift following fast.

III.

Blow, blow, ye winds, your mighty will
On lake, on river, glen and hill !
Though may ye in the greenwood wreak
The savage vengeance that ye seek,
And forest monarchs on the ground
Attest your fury all around,
Yet can ye not, with savage power,
Assert your sway beyond the tower,
Or pierce yon festal hall within,
Or quell the warriors' merry din.
For Kenmure's Lord has gather'd there

The young, the old, the brave, the fair !
Those bearded veterans proudly tell
Of valiant deeds by flood and fell,
While victory's voice on every side
Was ringing over Scotland wide.
Five rapid years their course had sped,
And many a field of strife had shed
Victorious glories o'er the head

And name of gallant Bruce !

And many chieftains stout and bold
Who sword and fame had basely sold
To England's king for England's gold,
And play'd, as victory northward roll'd,

With honour fast and loose,

Now England's monarch gladly spurn—
Again to Scotland's aid they turn,
And cast their lot with Scotland's king,
And loudly of his praises sing,
And swear to drive from Scottish shore
The English despot home once more,
And to defend their native land
From grasping England's cruel hand !
And noble Bruce, with loud acclaim,
Those recreant spirits hails again,
As sit they round the festal board
Of Douglas, Kenmure's latest lord (B).
Though wildly raves the gale without,
It cannot stay the joyous shout,
When approbation loudly rings,
As lady fair or gallant sings

Some song of love, or warrior lay,
In honour of that festal day.

IV.

For, faith ! the Castle's turrets grey
Have never known a braver day.
On Kenmure lea had never been
A merrier or more glorious scene.
Ne'er trod before thy banks, Loch Ken,
Such loyal bands of patriot men !
For Robert Bruce that very day
'Mid beat of drum and trumpet's bray,
With conquering banners streaming gay,
Had ridden up the rocky way
 That leads to Kenmure tower.
And with him rode a gallant band,
The pride of Scottish western land,
Where stalwart heart and loyal hand
 Upheld the Bruce's power.
Right proudly Scotland's banner waved
 Upon the Castle keep,
Its folds of silver gaily braved (c)
The wintry blast that round it raved,
And loud the acclamations rung,
The minstrels grey their welcome sung,
And casques of steel in air were flung,
 From casement maidens peep,
As royal Robert pass'd the guard,
That lined the Castle's outer ward,

And reach'd at length the inner yard.
And when dismounted, paused the King,
Louder the notes of welcome ring,
When Douglas kneeling on the sward,
Bids welcome fair to Scotland's lord,
And as he rises from his knee
He swears the Castle aye shall be,
In times of strife a loyal tower,
In days of peace a quiet bower !

V.

The ladies gay their kerchiefs wave,
And welcome Bruce's warriors brave.
The clarion's notes high sounding peal,
And drums are beat with loyal zeal.
And ancient bards were there to sing
Their lays in honour of the King;
And high upraise their martial strain,
And roof and rafter ring again
As swells on high the loud acclaim.
Such welcome never Kenmure saw
In varying days of northern war :
And Kenmure's halls shall never see
Like welcome paid to chivalry !
Now raves the gale around the tower,
The damsels leave their secret bower,
And haste them to the banquet hall,
Where ready on the feast to fall
Full many a knight was standing there,

And many a lord and lady fair.
When comes the monarch in his pride
And seats him by the Douglas' side.
When Whithorn's Prior grace had said,
With folded hand and bended head,
Then all the mighty feast begin,
While round them rings a merry din,
And while the guests hold converse gay,
The minstrels warlike snatches play
Or chant some merry roundelay.

VI.

More sumptuous feast on royal board
Was never spread for Scotland's lord.
Ne'er smiled those ancient halls, I ween,
On fairer or more gallant scene.
Full many a brave old Scottish lord
Is there to grace the Douglas' board,
And many a laird of Galloway,
Who strove with Bruce in former day.
And many a belted knight is there,
And gentle dames with braided hair,
And merry maidens blooming fair,
Amongst whose locks the jewels bright
Glisten'd beneath the torches' light,
While pages near their masters wait
And carve the fare, and hand the plate,
And fill the goblet brimming high,
And all their varying wants supply.
Brave knights are here from banks of Clyde,

And others from the border wide,
Some left their castles in the north,
And some have come from Tay and Forth,
Some spurr'd from Nith and Annan's shore,
And some have cross'd the mountains o'er,
From Cunninghame and rocky Kyle,
From many a barren western isle,
From many a distant highland glen
Come southward hastening gallant men,—
Their trysting-place the banks of Ken.
And Alice Graem, with flowing hair,
And Margaret Stewart too was there,
Dress'd just as Edward saw her stand
By fair Loch Trool, with oar in hand,
When sped the mountain to the glen,
And slew the flower of Pembroke's men.

VII.

The oaken table wide is spread,
And foreign wine is running red.
A mighty head of monster boar,
With salmon from the Ayrshire shore,
And swan and goose from bonnie Ken,
And wild fowl from the neighbouring fen,
And many a heron around the board,
Form dainty dish for dame or lord.
In honour's place, as meet should be,
A sturgeon* from the Solway sea,
And monster joints from o'er the border,

* The sturgeon was always considered a truly "Royal" fish.

The table grace in proper order.
While circles round the joyous laugh,
And gallant knights their liquor quaff,
And Edward, gay by festal board
As brave in field with lance and sword,
O'er Galloway and Carrick lord (D),
Smiled proudly on the damsels round,
And in each face fresh beauties found ;
And Malcolm bold, and Gilbert Haye,
At camp and feast a trusted stay,
With many a maid made gallant play.
My faith, a pleasant sight to see
Was that fair scene of revelry !

VIII.

Now is the royal banquet o'er.
As from the board the menials bore
The relics of the mighty feast,
A blessing craved that hoary priest ;
And when the benison was said,
He pray'd for grace on Bruce's head.
And now hath come the minstrels' time
To aid the feast with merry rhyme,
Or olden tale from lands afar,
Or lays of Scotland's patriot war.
Now beckons Douglas with his hand
The oldest of the minstrel band,
And royal Bruce with wine fill'd up
And gave the bard the flowing cup,

And bade him sing of tented field,
Or how fair maids to lovers yield.
As o'er his harp the minstrel hung,
And strains melodious from it wrung,
His voice, though slightly trembling, rings
Right proudly out, as thus he sings.

SONG.

Ballad of the Spider.

Oh ! wearily sails the sad wee bark,
As wearily as she may,
For she bears on board a Scottish lord,
As she sails to the west away (E).

Oh ! the skies are dark o'er that tiny bark,
And gruesome is the sea ;
The wild winds howl, and the thunders growl
Aloud in their awful glee.

And he hears the cry of the wild birds high,
As these words they sadly sing :
"Thou never shalt be of thy birthright free,
And never of Scotland King !"

Now the voyage it is done, and the ship it hath won
To Rathlin's rock-bound isle.
In that lonely land, with its exiled band,
King Robert must hide him awhile.

IX.

One night he laid, all wrapp'd in plaid,
His head on his helmet placed,
In a tottering shed, and a heathery bed
His royal form embraced.

As he wakeful lay, a spider grey
Essay'd to climb in vain (f) ;
And once and twice, ay, even thrice,
It fell to earth again.

Then he watch'd, as he lay, that spider grey,
Four times, and five, and six,
Still try in vain the roof to gain
Whereon its web to fix.

His gallant heart quail'd, for as oft had he fail'd
In the fight, like that insect grey—
“If yon spider fail at the next assail,
I will speed to the east away.”

'Twas thus he spake for conscience sake,
Yet he hopes that the spider grey
At the seventh time the beam shall climb,
And spread its net for prey !

Oh ! the feat it is done, and the spider hath won,
And light is the heart of the Bruce,
And he swears till he reign in fair Scotland again,
There shall never be treaty nor truce !

He hath winded a blast, and his merry men fast
Come hastening over the lea ;
“ Oh ! I see my fate—though come full late—
And Scotland *shall* be free ! ”

Oh ! merrily comes the bonnie wee bark,
As merrily as she may,
For our rightful lord she bears on board,
As she comes from the west away !

And he hears the cry of those birds on high,
Right cheerily now they sing,
“ We welcome thee o’er to thine own gay shore,
For thou art of Scotland King ! ”

Nor shall he forget, in a grateful debt,
When he kneels a prayer to pray,
That tottering shed, that heathery bed,
And the deeds of that spider grey !

x.

The strains die slowly through the hall :
The list’ning guests enraptured all
Applaud the bard ; and royal cheers
Fall grateful on the minstrel’s ears.
As the last notes were ringing high,
A tear was in the minstrel’s eye,
And trickled down his wither’d cheek.
As James of Douglas rose to speak,—

A wine-cup on the minstrel press'd,
And thus the harper old addressed :
" Oh ! Cuthbert Grey, of bards the sire,
Thou well hast tuned thy merry lyre,
Oft hast thou sung at festal board,
But ne'er before to Scotland's lord.
Yet, by my faith, thou singest well,
And prithee take another spell,
And please thy Monarch's list'ning ear.
But, minstrel, shed no woman's tear !
It ill becomes the minstrel's art
To sing such lay with woman's heart."
The taunt that gifted harper felt,
And as on bended knee he knelt,
What deep emotion shook his frame,
His trembling words and looks proclaim.
For ill can simple minstrel brook
A stern rebuke, or sterner look !

XI.

" I would, my lords, be ill at ease,
Did I not strive my best to please
Each gallant knight and lady gay
With the rude measure of my lay.
What though this heart were made of iron,
And were my courage as the lion,
'Twould ill become the harper old
To march to war with warriors bold.
There *was* a time when, 'mong the rest,

The first in battle oft I press'd,
And martial measures loudly play'd,
As we th' approaching foe survey'd ;
And oft upraised the cheering strain,
As on their ranks we charged again,
But now my race is nearly run ;
Yet many a deed of glory done,
And many a field of victory won,
These proudly flashing eyes have seen
In days gone by, when youth was green !
And when such theme as ye have heard
The minstrel's patriot breast hath stirr'd,
An all unwonted youthful fire
Imbues him as he strikes the lyre.
'Tis then the tears unbidden rise,
To dim his old and failing eyes.
Times are there when, 'mong mortals here,
The bravest shed a manly tear :
All honour to them when the heart
Is tuned by nature, not by art !
'Tis far beyond my simple power
To boast of youth in age's hour.
Yet though my trembling hand full soon
Will never win a loyal tune
Again from out my fav'rite lyre,
A slumbering but a patriot fire
Dwells buried in mine ancient breast,
E'en when my spirit is at rest,
That burns unquenching when I sing
Of glorious Bruce, the patriot's king. !"

XII.

The minstrel ceased : then backward shrank,
And with his fellow bards took rank.
But modest air and loyal speech
A monarch's kindly heart can reach.
Again old Cuthbert's breast is stirr'd
As lists he to the royal word.
When smiled the King the minstrel took
Fresh heart of grace at Bruce's look.
" Now, by my royal crown, full well
The Douglas' taunt thou didst repel,
Would all our courtiers here could say
Such loyal speech as Cuthbert Grey,
And would that every knight possess'd
The courage high of Cuthbert's breast ;
And would we might by magic art
Such feelings soft to all impart
As reign in Cuthbert's tender heart !
Then let our words thy spirit cheer :
And now, Lord Douglas, lend thine ear :
As thou didst taunt that minstrel grey,
A penalty thou needst must pay !
So, noble host, upraise thy voice,
And bid us all again rejoice."
The band of minstrels smiled to see,
Smiled all that goodly company—
When slowly from the festive board
Rose grim and sullen Kenmure's lord,
And glanced around that merry throng,

And then began his welcome song ;
And soon his anger melts away,
As on him smiled the ladies gay,
For well could Douglas blithely sing,
And oft his lays had pleased the King.
In deeds of valour who may yield
To Douglas on the battle field ?
And shall not maids with rapture hear
When Douglas charms the listening ear ?

XIII.

Kenmure's Welcome to Bruce.

Come, clink your glasses, merrily shout,
And may the roof tree ring ;
What ho ! ye varlets, there without,
Some more good liquor bring !
For Kenmure's walls are strong and stout,
And Kenmure's board is free,
An' come ye here for feast or rout,
Aye welcome shall ye be !

When Edward next the Solway fords,
Our castles to reduce,
If we have strength to wield our swords
We'll wield them for the Bruce !
Bid all our vassals watchful be,
And keep our armour bright,
For good King Robert's men are we,
And bravely will we fight.

And when our Northern horsemen pour
Like lightning on the foe,
Each Scottish spear shall drink their gore,
As down the varlets go.
If Southron wolves to Kenmure come,
An' come they day or night,
They'll hear the Northern lion growl,
And feel his deadly bite !

Our Scottish swords are keen and long,
And Northern hearts are bold,
Our brawny arms are just as strong
As e'er in days of old.
And foot to foot, and side by side,
Each knight and squire shall stand,
And strike for Bruce our king and pride,
And for our native land !

XIV.

When Kenmure's bugle winds a blast
From Kenmure's castle wall,
Spur, gallants, spur your chargers fast,
And head for Kenmure's hall !
And should ye come, ye trusty knights,
Our castle to defend,
We'll show those braggart English wights
How Scottish bows shall bend.

And while our archers on the wall
Have strength to bend a bow,

We'll give a welcome here to all,
And death to every foe !
When burst our knights of gentle birth
Like tempest on the foes,
Each Southron knave shall bite the earth
Who meets their deadly blows.

Then shall King Edward rue the day
He o'er the border came,
Each soldier made of English clay
Shall quake at Kenmure's name.
And ladies bright shall grace the ball
When vict'ry shines on Bruce,
With knights of fame in Kenmure's hall—
As oft is Kenmure's use.

Fill up ! fill up ! with blood-red wine,
And let the rafters ring ;
And clink with me, and drink with me,
A health unto the King !
A health to bonnie Scotland's lord !
Nor will we call a truce
Till all shall cry at camp and board
"Long live King Robert Bruce !"

xv.

When Douglas' martial air was done,
And other bards their praise had won,
The monarch called the ladies fair

To strike the chord or sing an air.
A simple ditty then began
A lady of an ancient clan—
A gentle dame, whose husband gay
Was o'er the seas and far away,
One of a small but noble band
Who battled in the Holy Land,
And who the pilgrimage had ta'en
To expiate some olden stain
That on his father's memory lay—
So he his valour needs display.
And he hath left his lady fair,
And with her is the youthful heir
To his proud name and lineage high,
And thus she sings his lullaby.
For now her harp a minstrel brings,
And as that lady sweetly sings
Her gentle voice full richly rings
 Out on the stilly night.
Close to her bosom, soft and warm,
Secure from human ill or harm,
And guarded by one lily arm,
 Her infant slumbers light.
And as the harper strikes the chord,
In thought she joins her absent lord,
Who with the faithful wields his sword
 In that far distant land.
Her heart, so far beyond the sea,
Pours forth an air both wild and free ;
The little form upon her knee

Holds up a tiny hand.
She scarce may heed her sleeping child,
For love like hers is fresh and wild,
And love hath all her youth beguiled,
And louder swells the strain,
Like waves upon a rocky shore
The harp sends forth a sullen roar,
And then, its strength and passion o'er,
It sinks to rest again.

XVI.

The Crusader's Child's Lullaby.

Hush, hush thee to rest, though the dreary winds
blow,
And the world is asleep in its mantle of snow ;
Though leafless the branches, and silent the bird,
Though the howl of the wolf in the forest is heard,
Though sad be my heart, I rejoice in thy birth,
It is night, but not dark on this beautiful earth.
God's lights of the north I can see in the sky,
So rest thee, sweet babe, for thy mother is nigh.

When summer returns in her glory again,
When primrose and daisy lie thick on the plain,
And bluebells are nodding their heads in the glade,
And we fancy all nature too lovely to fade ;
When the voice of the cuckoo is heard on the weald,
Then, then with my babe will I wander a-field.

Then hush thee, my child of the bonnie blue eye,
Sleep soundly, my darling, thy mother is nigh.

Thy father, sweet babe, with the best of the brave
Has sail'd far away o'er the turbulent wave,
To the Araby shore, where the infidel band
Of the Turk 'neath the crescent hath taken its stand.
He stoutly, sweet infant, hath chosen his part,
With our noble crusaders so gallant of heart ;
Lest evils assail him, and danger be nigh,
A prayer let us raise to our Father on high !

On the wall of the castle the warder I hear,
And the bay of the blood-hound rings loudly and
clear

As he howls to the moon, which, far up in the height
Of the heavens looks earthward to bid us good-night.
And little stars twinkle, their numbers as sand
Of the ocean as countless, a glorious band.
So hush thee to sleep, gently rock'd on my knee,
For the bonnie wee stars gaily twinkle for thee.

Though the scream of the her'n as he wings to the
mere,

And the hoot of the owlet we often may hear,
And the moan of the wind, as it rattles the pane,
From slumber may waken my darling again—
Thy curly wee head, it shall lie on my breast,
Like a sweet bonnie bird in its own little nest.
So rest thee, sweet babe, in my bosom until
The sun with its beauty our chamber shall fill.

When homeward they haste from the infidel land,
'Mid the foremost in valour thy father shall stand ;
And he promised to bring with him over the sea,
Rich gems of the east for my baby and me.
Then the pearl of the ocean thy neck shall adorn,
On thy wrist shall the coral of scarlet be worn ;
With jewels as rare shall be deck'd thine attire,
So rest thee, sweet infant, and dream of thy sire !

* * * * *

The feast is done: 'tis the midnight hour,
And each fair lady hath sought her bower,
And save for the sentinel on the tower,
And his steady tramp by the outer wall,
On Kenmure's castle doth silence fall,
And each brave lord doth sleep in hall,
Till the trumpet sounds reveillé call.

XVII.

A few short weeks have pass'd away
At Kenmure since that festal day:
The latest wintry snow is o'er,
And banks are green by Kenmure's shore,
And frost and ice hold sway no more.
With merry notes the woodlands ring,
And Nature hails the welcome spring.
But good King Robert doth not stand
To-day by Kenmure's flowery strand,

No knights are there, no ladies gay,
No bugle rings on Lowran's brae,
Grim silence reigns on Bennan's hill,
Save for the sound of distant rill,
And in the castle all is still.
No form but of the sentry tall
Appears upon the battled wall,
No sound is heard of human cheer
But when the warder clinks his spear,
Or bark of bloodhound keeping ward
And watch within the castle yard.
But Kenmure's lord is far away,
And Scotland's King hath sped to-day
Upon a mission bright and gay.
At early dawn he left Loch Dee
With all his gallant company,
Each knight and page and warrior dress'd
In gayest garb that each possess'd,
And southward by the river's bank,
O'er boulders vast, 'mid sedges rank,
'Neath Craigencallie winds their way (G),
Where on the hill the sunbeams play,
And cairns of warriors meet their sight,
And mark the scene of Raploch fight.

XVIII.

The scene around appears to Bruce
More grandly savage than its use,
And Bruce's spirit takes its flight

In thought to Craigencallie's height.
Again he sees his troops below
With sword and pike repulse the foe,
But still the Southern warriors pour
Upon their ranks, like mighty roar
Of river rushing down in flood,
So come they on athirst for blood !
Though Scottish shafts, like sheets of hail,
Are beating on their coats of mail,
Though loudly sounds the Gall'way flail (H),
That gallant onset who may stand ?
Now what can save the Northern band ?
And backward Bruce's soldiers go,
While onward dash the numerous foe ;
And archers shower upon their flank,
And shake the Shiltrums' treble rank (1).
Now who shall stem the tide of war ?
When, hark ! a fearful sound afar
Is borne upon the mountain gale,
And loudly echoes down the vale.
The English turn their upward sight
To Craigencallie's dizzy height,
Whence other force in proud array
Is madly hastening to the fray ;
Scarce can they see for blinding sun
The numerous foemen downward run.
But warrior shout and bugle clear
Fall fiercely on the English ear,
Nor for the onslaught wait they there,
While cries and curses rend the air,

Proud England's knights and warriors flee
For safety o'er the heathery lea,
And Bruce's followers chase them well
By mountain wild, by bosky dell,
And few escape the tale to tell.
Then loudly laugh'd the King with glee,
Nor fail'd to thank the gallant three—
McLurg, and Murdoch, and McKie,
Who play'd the foe such glorious pranks,
And spread confusion in their ranks.

XIX.

But onward holds the Bruce his way,
'Mid massive rocks all torn and grey,
Which heaven in a bygone day
 Hurl'd down the mountain's breast,
And stone on stone upheaved they lie,
And breezes o'er them gently sigh
 Where now at peace they rest.
And here sounds forth the plover's cry,
And russet-plumaged moorfowl fly
 Far from the haunts of men,
And where no mortal feet may scare
From heathy couch the timid hare,
 Nor bittern from the fen.
When mists roll up the mountain side,
Each rock and cleft with purple dyed
 The sun's first rays reveal.
And foxes hurry o'er the brae,

And ravens speed upon their way,
Croaking to see the light of day,
And seek their morning meal.
The peewit tumbles through the air
The stranger from her brood to scare,
The noisy curlew circles round,
And all is wild and sterile ground.
And here the wandering foot shall tread
Where sweetly bends its graceful head
That lovely flower which poets told
On Mount Parnassus grew of old (J),
And opens to the sunshine bright
Its petals fair of creamy white,
While tangled tufts of golden broom
Around them shed a rich perfume,
And side by side with heather bell
The gold and scarlet asphodel
The beauties of old Nature tell.
Then may the traveller turn his eye
To where old Merrick towering high
Upreats his rugged crest,
All glorious, as who should say,
"I all the hills around defy!"
He seems to meet the azure sky,
And rules o'er all the rest!

XX.

To gaze on such a scene as this
The Bruce accounts his greatest bliss,

Though wild indeed it be.
For where is that romantic land,
Or where is that enchanted strand,
And lies it o'er the sea,
That could this prospect fair excel,
Which Bruce hath learn'd to love so well,
And patriot love with magic spell
Hath twined around his kindly heart?
Oh! may not patriot love impart
To erring mortals here below
Desire a better land to know,
And stimulate to noble deeds,
To aid the stranger when he needs,
Relieve the sick, uphold the weak,
And welfare for our fellows seek?
The mavis tunes his happiest lay
In rapture to this glorious day:
The wild flowers bloom in every glen
Far from the haunts of toiling men,
And brightly shines a sunny gleam
On hill and dale, on lake and stream,
And Bruce's eyes delight to rest
Upon the mountain's rugged crest.
How dear to him the bonnie bell
Of blue that grows in yonder dell,
How dear the purple heather wild,
Whose flowers he pluck'd while yet a child,
How sweet the breeze from off the hill,
And tinkle of the distant rill,
Whose gentle murmur lulls to rest

The raging passions of the breast.
Above his head is heaven's blue,
And all around a glorious view
 Is spread before the eye.
Oh ! were he free from martial toil,
The treasures of his native soil
 Could every need supply.

XXI.

But when old Nature's face is stirr'd,
And turmoil's angry voice is heard,
When surges lash the sounding shores,
Or when the foaming torrent roars,
When o'er the mountain sweeps the gale,
And rolling thunder fills the vale,
A ruder spirit wakes his heart,
As better fits the warrior's art ;
Then martial ardour fires his eye,
'Tis then his soul would soar on high,
And dream of glorious times to be,
That yet shall make his country free !
And now in thought he's borne again,
Where hostile armies throng the plain,
Where Scotia's banners waving high
Proclaim her sons must do or die !
His gallant charger bears him far,
Amid those stately ranks of war,
Where yeomen bold and valiant knight,
All eager to commence the fight,

Are onward spurring 'gainst the foe,
With lances couch'd and pointed low.
While yells of rage and hate and spite,
The clash of arms, the din of fight,
The wounded soldiers' stifled groan,
The dying war-horse' bitter moan,
And then the victor's ringing cheers
Are loudly sounding in his ears !

XXII.

But now the royal travellers' band
Have left behind that mountain land,
And onward by the smiling Dee
Still spur they southward toward the sea,
And in the rear they quickly leave
The lonesome tower of stately Threave.
The summer's day was well nigh o'er,
Ere met their gaze the Solway shore,
Where far away the galleon's sail
Is spread to catch the favouring gale.
The lark was resting on the lea :
The gull was sleeping on the sea :
The shadows deepen'd in the west,
The sun was sinking to his rest,
And on the sea his crimson light
Had tinged the waves with colour bright,
And bade to each a fair good night,
When Bruce's party slowly wound
A gently sloping hill around,

Then, maiden, other pastures seek,
And come to look on mine,
The breeze shall love to fan thy cheek,
The sun shall love to shine.

O'erhead, beyond the fleecy cloud,
The mighty mountains rise ;
In air the skylark carols loud,
The plover shrilly cries.
To see thee smile on banks of Dee
Shall flower the golden broom ;
The purple foxglove all for thee,
And gay bluebell shall bloom.

The heathery hills that bound the Dee,
East, west, and south, and north,
Shall in thy face new beauties see
Whene'er thou roamest forth.
The little birds of thee shall sing
In every verdant glade ;
With rapture shall the forest ring
For thee, my lovely maid !

Then, darling, leave thine own sweet glen,
And quit thy native lea ;
Love Galloway and banks of Ken,
Love them as I love thee !
For Dee and Ken are calm and still,
Where blooms the purple heath ;
I'll love thee there, my darling, till
We separate in death !

XXV.

Now mounted Gilbert Haye his steed,
And prick'd across the velvet mead ;
And then that fair but wearied maid
Her head upon her pillow laid.
But vainly courts the damsel sleep,
Though heavy languors o'er her creep ;
She could not win a calm repose,
For sleep and love are deadly foes.
But thoughts go coursing through her brain,
She lives her youthful days again.
And will she be as blithe, as gay,
As then, when match'd with Gilbert Haye ?
Alas ! fair Alice, who may know ?
Sweet maiden, time alone can show !
From out the shadows of the past
Dim vanish'd forms will gather fast,
And in the ever active brain
They live, and move, and speak again.
Who hath not felt at time like this,
When dwelt the mind on perish'd bliss,
When those we love were far away,
Or vanish'd from the scene for aye,
Their forms once more can play in sleep
The part that once was theirs to keep,
And distant scenes we love to see
In sleep may often with us be ?
Sweet memory loves fair scenes to twine
Around the heart, as loves to climb

The tendrils round their parent vine,
When comes sweet sleep to aching head,
As tossing wild on restless bed

The wearied body lies.

Oh ! give the sufferer slumbers deep,
And calm refreshment, gentle sleep !
Beneath thy spell the maiden keep,
And close the aching eyes.

XXVI.

Yet when fair Alice thinks of home,
And weary memories northward roam,
At length a calm refreshing sleep
Her fairy form doth gently steep,
And happy thoughts and happy dreams
Glide through her brain like fairy gleams.
Sleep summons forth, in fair array,
The forms we love, the young, the gay ;
And once again in sleep we roam
The pastures of our own sweet home.
Brief happiness the spirit knows
As sinks the body to repose.

Thus thinks the soldier in his dreams
Beside the watchfire's ruddy gleams

That guard the sleeping camp :

Fair slumber wafts him home once more,
He stands again on British shore

Far, far from martial tramp ;
He treads again the village street,

And, hastening on his wife to greet,
He hears his children's pattering feet
 Instead of horse's stamp.
Again he hears the song of birds,
And lowing of returning herds
 When eve is gath'ring fast.
He hears again the noisy mill,
And bleat of sheep on distant hill,
And mountain streamlet's tinkling rill,
 In place of trumpet blast.
He plucks with pride the monthly rose
That through the year so sweetly grows
 Against his cottage wall.
His children cull the simple flowers
That flourish 'mid those humble bowers
 That make his all in all.

XXVII.

Thus thinks the sailor when his bark
Is wildly toss'd by tempest dark
 Upon an angry sea,
And oft his mind is fixed on love,
When mast and rigging groan above,
 And shouts the storm for glee.
His thoughts are many a league away
When watching for that streak of grey
That heralds forth approaching day,
 He walks the lonely deck.
As strains his eye to pierce the night,

He looks on scenes beyond the sight,
Nor thinks of storm or wreck.
Betwixt the sheets of blinding foam
He sees again his cottage home,
And now he hears the hum of bees
That cluster round the linden trees,
And sees the lovely chestnuts bloom,
And scents again their rich perfume,
While yonder in the balmy air,
Beside the little door,
His mother with her silver hair
Is busy knitting in her chair,
As oft in days of yore.
And in the sighing of the gale
He hears once more the plover's wail
On Scotland's bonnie shore.

XXVIII.

Fair broke the morn ; soft blew the breeze,
And gently shook Dundrennan's trees ;
The summer sun smiled fresh and gay
On flow'ry mead and abbey grey.
'Twas such a day you would declare
Was made for knight and lady fair :
If heaven design'd the match to bless
With smile of heavenly tenderness,
That glorious orb, that azure sky,
Were surely smiling from on high.
Now every face was bright and gay :

Dundrennan's monks kept holiday :
And merrily was the Abbey bell
Sent echoing forth o'er hill and dell.
Right gaily smiled each jolly monk
As on that festal morn they drunk
A health in liquor-old and rare
To bridegroom brave and lady fair,
Then to the abbey went their way
To welcome there the bridal gay.
Then loudly forth the trumpets peal,
The people shout with loyal zeal,
For Bruce shall give the bride away
To that brave warrior Gilbert Haye.
As to the altar walks the bride
Strode gallant Robert by her side,
The monks a mighty anthem raise,
And loudly swell'd the notes of praise.

XXIX.

Never did sun more brightly shine
When toll'd the bell the hour of nine ;
Never did braver warrior band
In aisle of church or abbey stand.
Those airy columns grand and old
A gallant line of soldiers bold,
A glorious rank of knights behold.
With helm and waving plume in hand
The bravest knights in Scotland stand ;
And many a lady's lovely face

Shone brightly there the scene to grace ;
On either side, along the floor
From the high altar to the door
They line the way the bride must tread,
While pennons flutter overhead,
And silks and satins rustle gay,
And glisten in each sunny ray
Flung from the windows down below,
Which steeps them in a holy glow :
And jingling spur and armour bright
Lend martial colour to the sight.
Each dame and damsel curtseys low,
Obeisance makes with courtly show,
As past the bridal party go,
And gallants who for country bled
To that fair maid bend low the head.
Her silken train her pages four
With stately stride behind her bore.
And as proud Gilbert turn'd his eye
On all that goodly company,
A happy light shone in his glance
As round his head the sunbeams dance.
As moved the bridal up the aisle
Appear'd each sculptur'd face to smile
Of knight and lady lying there
In welcome to the maiden fair,
And many a grinning stony face
That crowns those pillars' lofty grace,
Who on the scene below looks down,
Seem'd to relax its wonted frown.

The ancient abbot grave and grim
Smiled as he sang the bridal hymn,
And when to gallant Gilbert Haye
King Robert gave the bride away,
The abbot by the altar stands,
And joins in one their loving hands ;
And then the monks an anthem sung,
And grandly loud the music rung
And echoed through the stately pile,
And peal'd along the pillar'd aisle,
And through Dundrennan's sacred fane
Roll'd high the notes of praise again.
Ne'er saw Dundrennan such a scene ;
Nor monk nor abbot shall, I ween,
Lay eyes again on sight as gay
Till crumble thy old walls away,
And naught be left but lichen grey
O'er mouldering ruins in decay,
To tell of all thy glories fled,
To tell of all thy vanish'd dead,—
Until the thrush his carol sings
Where now the sacred music rings,
And daws hold undisputed sway
Over Dundrennan's abbey grey !

xxx.

The abbot benediction gave,
And bride and bridegroom knelt to crave
A blessing at the monarch's hand,

And thus the King his answer plann'd :
" Now, Gilbert, to thy bride be true,
For fairer maid we never knew ;
And better wife 'twere hard to name
For stalwart knight than Alice Graem.
And, Lady Alice, lend thine ear
One word of praise from Bruce to hear,
In favour of thy gallant mate
Who meets in thee his happy fate.
'Mong all the loyal hearts and brave
Who sail'd with Bruce across the wave,
From Rathlin's islet years ago,
'Mong all who fought our tyrant foe,
Who shared our dangers and our toil,
Who strove to free our native soil,
We could not, lovely lady, say
A braver name than Gilbert Haye ! "

XXXI.

Conclusion.

But now the minstrel well may cease
His lay, and wend him home in peace.
His ancient harp may silent be,
For now his native land is free !
And how that gallant task was done,
How Bruce the whole of Scotland won,
Each noble lord, each lady sage,
May read on northern history's page,
That better far than bard shall show

How Scotland triumph'd o'er the foe.
What boots it more for him to tell,
What every Scotsman knows full well,
How Scotland's bravest champions fell
 On Bannock's famous field?
Or how they charged the Southern ranks,
And thundered on the archers' flanks,
And bore the hated foe to ground,
And how the wounded knights around
 Were forced to die or yield?
For is not stamp'd upon the soul
Of Scotia's sons a glorious scroll,
 In letters formed of gold,
Of those who fell that bloody day,
Who freely gave their lives away,
And those who foremost 'mid the fray,
 Were fierce and stout and bold?
Each gallant knight whose noble name
Adorns that splendid roll of fame
Shall live in Scottish bosoms still,
And Northern hearts with ardour fill,
 Throughout all future time;
While praises of their patriot king
Fair Scottish maids shall ever sing
 In this romantic clime.
But now the weary strife is o'er,
All, all is joy on Scotland's shore!

xxxii.

Saint Andrew's Cross in conscious pride
From sea to sea is waving wide ;
From Orkney's Isles and wild Cape Wrath,
And southwards past the Tay and Forth.
It floats upon the northern breeze,
O'er castle walls, o'er flowery leas.
It graces Stirling's martial bowers,
It floats on fair Dunedin's towers.
It waves o'er Berwick's border gate,
Where Nigel met his fearful fate ;
On Berwick Castle's highest tower,
Where English Edward's hate and power
In Lady Buchan's cage was shown,
Though now that lovely bird be flown.
It waves o'er Ross and wild Argyle,
O'er towers in many a western isle ;
In Arran fair it floats on high,
In Bute it flaunts the summer sky.
Upon Dumbarton's Castle wall
Its folds of silver proudly fall.
It floats o'er many a vessel side,
Reflected in the waves of Clyde,
O'er Lanark's hills, in Gala's dale,
It floats upon the favouring gale.
Where smiling Teviot's banks are green,
The Bruce's banner gay is seen.
And convent bells, with loyal hail,
Are clanging forth, o'er hill and dale,

The glorious news from sea to sea,
That Bruce is King, and Scotland free !

XXXIII.

Proud Brucean banners waving gay
Deck every tower in Galloway,
While vaunts with pride his native Ayr
The fame of good King Robert there ;
And Conynghame and loyal Kyle
Upon the Lord of Carrick smile.
And fair Dumfries and Solway's strand,
And all that patriot border land,
From Esk and Liddle to the Tweed,
Hail Bruce their saviour in their need.
In Forfar, Perth, and Aberdeen
Rejoicing far and near is seen,
And patriot heads are proudly raised,
And eyes with patriot valour dazed ;
And tears of hope and joy are shed,
And blessing shower'd on Bruce's head
By dames who scarce can stand for age,
By blushing maid and gentle page ;
And children lisp his kingly name,
And shouting youths with loud acclaim
Their glad young voices raise on high,
And swear with Bruce to win or die !

XXXIV.

Now warriors grey with age and toil
Survey with pride their native soil,
Forget those days so lately o'er
When tyrants reign'd on Scotland's shore,
 And fear on every side ;
When Edward ruled with iron hand,
And clouds of war their bonnie land
 O'ershow'd far and wide.
When hill and glen with gore was red,
And Scotland's noblest blood was shed !
All, all the fearful past forgot,
In present joy !—Their future lot
They trust to Him Who faileth not ;
And thousands humbly bend the knee
To God, Who spared them thus to see
Victorious Bruce and Scotland free !

THE END.

NOTES.

NOTES TO INTRODUCTION TO CANTO I.

NOTE A.

*" And love, like him, those mountains hoar,
Where wander'd once the savage boar."*

WILD boars, in common with large red deer (of a species probably far larger than those now met with in the Scottish highlands), wolves, and other fierce wild animals, were very numerous in the south and south-west of Scotland, and doubtless also throughout the country generally. With regard to boars in Galloway, the very ancient tradition of the manner in which the family of Gordon obtained their name, though probably incorrect, is amusing, and may not be out of place here.

"The ancestor of the Gordons, in Alexander the Third's reign, was known as Adam of Lochinvar. In those days a certain enormous wild boar had ravaged the whole district, had done such an amount of damage, and killed and disembowelled with its mighty tusks so many of its pursuers, that at length the King offered to give a rich piece of land, near the town of Kirkcudbright, to whoever should slay the animal. Thereupon Adam de Lochinvar sought out the said boar, whose depredations had principally been in the wild district of the Glenkens, and after a very hard struggle, was so successful as to kill it; but such had been his exertions,

that he was thoroughly worn out in body, and lying down beside the carcass of the slain, he soon fell into a sound sleep.

"As he slept, a neighbouring laird, named Maxwell, passed by, and seeing at a glance how matters stood, he cut off the boar's head and made away with the prize. No sooner had Adam awoke than he discovered, of course, the unworthy trick that had been played, but—careful man that he was—before he had settled down to his nap he had cut out the monster's tongue and secured it in his pouch. He felt that he had no time to lose, so hurrying home, he mounted his fleetest horse, and rode so fast to the capital that Maxwell, on his nefarious errand, had only anticipated him by an hour. Already, however, Maxwell had obtained an audience of the King; the boar's head lay before him, and he was confidently claiming the broad acres as his reward. It was at this moment that Lochinvar rushed into the royal presence and claimed a hearing. The King listened patiently while each gave the other the lie direct.

" 'Maxwell has shown us the head,' said the monarch; 'how, then, can you ask us to believe you?'

" 'Sire,' rejoined Lochinvar, 'a part only of the head is there.'

" 'He lies again,' cried Maxwell; 'you, sire, can judge whether he is to be believed.'

"Adam swung round his leathern pouch. He produced a tongue, and triumphantly exclaimed, as the false baron turned deadly pale, 'Unless that tongue fits into its own socket, let me be branded as a liar!'

"The jaws were forced open—no tongue lay between those terrible tusks—truth asserted her power. A few moments later and the trembling Maxwell was led forth a prisoner, and his own lands were added by the King to those which had been so gallantly earned by the man he had endeavoured to supplant.

" 'What is your name?' said the monarch, interested in the young hunter.

" 'Sire, I am called Adam of Lochinvar.'

" 'And how came you to slay this boar?'

“ ‘As he turned upon me furiously, sire, I ran my sword into his open mouth, and *gored him down!*’

“ ‘You have this day won yourself lands and a name,’ rejoined Alexander; ‘kneel.’ The youth knelt, and the King, striking him with his sword, cried, ‘Rise up, Sir Adam de *Goredown!* Go and enjoy your properties, and take for the future a boar’s head as your achievement.’

“ De Goredown returned a man of mark. The lands which he acquired by royal grant, lying between the Tarff and the Dee, still bear the name of *Tongueland*; and three boars’ heads have ever since been carried by his descendants, the senior branch of which are the Gordons of Lochinvar.”

Sir Andrew Agnew, from whom (“Hereditary Sheriffs of Galloway,” p. 116) I have quoted the above, gives it as his opinion that notwithstanding this pretty story, it is probable that the Gordons came from Normandy originally, where there is a manor of that name, a scion of the house having been Bertrand de Goredoun, the archer who slew Richard the First at the siege of Chalos.* However, for the honour of our ancient traditions, I fain hope I may be excused for believing the more interesting account of the origin of the name, whose chief in later times, the gallant Lord Kenmure, was—

“The bravest lord that ever Galloway saw!”

Some, who would discredit our story, hold that the origin of Tongueland parish is from the shape being somewhat of the form of a tongue of land, but there can be no question that the Gordons of Lochinvar were once owners of lands in this parish of some extent. Tradition hath it, that on Adam de Gordoun’s triumphant return home from the capital, he gathered together all his retainers, and erected a monster cairn of stones on the very spot where the boar was slain. There is, so far as I can ascertain, no idea now of the spot where this cairn existed.

* Or Chaluz, in Normandy.

NOTE B.

*"When Comyn's blood was running red,
And Royal Bruce from vengeance sped—
Where found he first secure retreat,
Where laid he first in slumber sweet
His wearied body, spent with toil,
But on Drumlanrig's friendly soil?
And did not Tynron's woods provide
Asylum meet wherein to hide?"*

Immediately after the murder of the Red Comyn by Robert the Bruce, before the high altar in the church of the Minorites, or Grey Friars, at Dumfries, and when Bruce rushed to the door, he met his two powerful friends, Roger Kirkpatrick, of Closeburn, and James de Lindsay, who asked with eagerness what had happened, and what tidings he bore. "Bad tidings, for I doubt I have slain Comyn," replied Bruce. "Doubtest thou?" replied Kirkpatrick; "I make siccar" (meaning he would make sure), and rushing together with Lindsay into the church, they at once despatched the wounded Comyn. In memory of this bloody deed the Closeburn Kirkpatricks have ever since held for crest a hand holding a dagger, and for motto the words, "I mak' sicker."

From the manuscript account of the Presbytery of the parish of Penpont (on the Nith, and close to Drumlanrig Castle), I take the following extract referring to the ancient tradition, and which, whether true or not, is implicitly believed by all the inhabitants of Nithsdale to the present day:—"The steep hill, called the Dune of Tynron, is of a considerable height, upon the top of which there hath been some habitation or fort. There have been in ancient times, on all hands of it, very thick woods and great about that place, which made it the more inaccessible, into which K. Robert Bruce is said to have been conducted by Roger Kirkpatrick of Closeburn, after they had killed the Cumin at Dumfriess,

which is nine miles from this place, whereabouts it is probable that he did abide for some time hereafter ; and it is reported, that during his abode there he did often divert to a poor man's cottage, named Brownrig, situate in a small parcel of stoney ground, incompassed with thick woods, where he was content sometimes with such mean accommodation as the place could afford. The poor man's wife being advised to petition the King for somewhat, was so modest in her desires, that she sought no more but security for the croft in her husband's possession, and a liberty of pasturage for a very few cattle of different kinds on the hill, and the rest of the bounds of which privilege that ancient family by the injury of time, hath a long time been, and is, deprived : but the croft continues in the possession of the heirs and successors lineally descended of this Brownrig and his wife ; so that this family, being more ancient than rich, doth yet continue in the name, and, as they say, retains the old charter."

Now, though some have discredited this old tradition, I must confess that I can see no reason whatever for disbelieving its accuracy. What more likely than the Bruce, pursued by the vengeance of those who were his declared enemies, should have been led by his friend and brother-soldier, Kirkpatrick, to this inaccessible forest retreat, for such Tynron hill must have then been, and which the knight of Closeburn must have been well acquainted with, on account of its being only about three miles from Closeburn, of which estate probably it then formed a portion ? The present owner is His Grace of Buccleuch and Queensberry. I have often ascended the Doon of Tynron, and a glorious view over Nithsdale is obtained therefrom, and we have evidence of there undoubtedly having been a strong fortress on its summit. The mountain is very steep and of a curious pyramidal shape, its slopes being clothed with natural wood, doubtless the offspring of those very trees which clothed it in the Bruce's time, which adds to its great beauty, and makes it undoubtedly one of the most lovely features of Dumfriesshire ; indeed, I have ever looked upon it as the finest wild-looking hill in the south of Scotland. Upon its summit is a small level piece of "table

land," and it was here the Castle of Tynron must have stood ; and by the appearance of what stones are still left they must have been procured from a distance of some four and a half miles, and carried up the precipitous ascent with infinite labour : some were removed rather over a century ago for building purposes, which was a great pity. I have traced ditches around the summit distinctly, and what must have been a Roman road leads from the Doon along the hill-side for a considerable distance, and this is in excellent preservation in many parts. There exists on one face of this remarkably interesting hill, a curious projection, which considerably resembles a man's nose. This is the origin, no doubt, of the name Tin-droyn in old British, and of Dun-ron in Irish, changed again into Tinron, or Tynron—Dune, signifying the mount with a nose.

NOTES TO CANTO I.

NOTE A.

*" Upon the crest of Curleywee,
And on the bosom of Loch Dee,
On rugged Craigencallie's height
Plays 'mongst the rocks the fitful light."*

THE Loch of Dee is a lonely, but very lovely sheet of water, situated in the wildest part of the parish of Minnigaff, the largest parish in the stewartry of Kirkcudbright, where few travellers penetrate, but which abounds in glorious scenery and historical reminiscences, and which but requires to be more widely known to be as highly appreciated as any part of Scotland's finest scenery.

Loch Dee, like the Loch of Trool, is rich in interest to the geologist, and traces of the volcanic and glacial periods abound

around both these glorious lakes. Loch Dee is about one and a half miles in length, and a little more than three-quarters of a mile broad, its shores being wild and barren in the extreme. Amongst the volcanic hills in its vicinity are several caves, or caverns, of various sizes, and no doubt in more remote days many others existed, whose entrances have long since been stopped up, perhaps by human hand, or more probably by nature's agency in the shape of periodical avalanches of masses of rock from the mountain crests, and their very existence now is forgotten.

From the summit of the mountain called Curleywee (2,212 feet high) a grand view is obtained of the surrounding wilds, which were all included in the ancient "forest of Buchan," which stretched, in the Bruce's time, for many and many a mile around. And Craigencallie, a towering and rugged mountain to the north-eastward of the Loch of Dee, will ever be remembered as the scene of the celebrated conflict between Robert the Bruce's followers and the English, and which is described in a subsequent note.

NOTE B.

*"For bird and beast must surely be
A paradise by wild Loch Dee."*

Around the lake, and amongst the grand, wild, and solitary hills in its immediate neighbourhood, where the lonely shepherd, and in autumn the grouse-shooter, are the only signs of human life to be met with, it is not remarkable that many of the rarer birds and animals, long since killed down in more frequented parts of the country, still exist. Amongst these the lordly eagle holds first rank, and often have I seen it in the forest of Buchan, winging its way to some high crag over the Loch of Dee or Doon. The buzzard, the peregrine falcon, the raven, the badger, or "brock," as the folk of the country call it (as they do in the north of Ireland also), the otter, and the mountain fox, are still common, and a few real wild cats

(nearly extinct in Scotland now) still hold their own, in wilds where of old the savage wolf wandered over the mountains, the red deer made his abode in the forest, and the wild boar was numerous in the marshes. The osprey, or "fishing eagle," is also still to be met with, and still, I believe, breeds annually in Ayrshire and Galloway : at all events, it did so since 1871, and is often to be observed by the sea-shore, and sometimes also inland, by the more sequestered of the many mountain lakes. In Bruce's time the wilds of Loch Dee must have been a very paradise for the *fera natura*.

NOTE C.

" Or goblin spirits from Lochricarr ? "

Lochricarr, or as it is often written, Lochricawr, is a wildy-situated mountain lake in the Ayrshire portion of the ancient forest of Buchan, a few miles to the northward of Loch Doon. Its shores, in common with those of numerous other mountain lochs, were supposed to be haunted by goblins or sprites. The author has heard shepherds tell, within the last few years, wonderful stories of the "mer-ladies" that are still to be seen on bright moonlight nights in summer time, sitting on the shores of some of the wilder lakes, combing their long hair ; but, if disturbed, the fair apparition at once melts away into thin air. But many of the mountain people still devoutly believe in these lake goblins.

NOTE D.

*" A pearly drop of dew shall still
The bosom of the sundew fill."*

The creeping sundew, of which there are several species known in Great Britain, and of which the commonest are the "long-leaved" and the "round-leaved," is an inconspicuous but very lovely little bog-plant. It is especially common in

Galloway, the mountainous parts of Ayrshire and Dumfriesshire, and, indeed, probably in every Scottish county where heather and bog abound. The tiny plant is but two or three inches in height, and its oddly-shaped thick leaves are densely covered with curious thick hairs, each one of which is tipped by a drop of viscid fluid, which, however bright the day, gives to the plant itself the appearance of having a drop of dew in its centre. Little flies, gnats, and the like insects are attracted by the sweet taste of this fluid, and, becoming entangled amongst the clammy hairs, die upon the leaves. The plant is carnivorous, and, *mirabile dictu!* will and does actually eat up the victims upon its leaves. This anyone can prove, as the author has often done, by placing a sundew plant in a shallow plate, and, taking care to keep it damp and supply it with gnats and small flies, the observer will perceive the insects gradually but surely are sucked in by the plant. In former days the sundew, or *drosera*, was used by the natives of Galloway as a medicine, and its juice, mingled with milk, is still used as a good cosmetic for ladies.

NOTE E.

*"They have look'd on the beautiful chasm of Ness,
Where gambols the Doon, in its bonnie caress."*

The river Doon—that "bonnie Doon" immortalized by Burns—flows out of the lake of the same name, and at once, on leaving the lake, takes its rapid course down a most lovely rocky glen, known as the "Glen of Ness," which is enclosed within the beautiful policies of Berbeth, the seat of the late Hon. Mrs. McAdam Cathcart, of Craigengillan. The current of the Doon flows with such fearful strength down the glen, that when I have hunted it with my pack of otter hounds, as I frequently have done, the very strongest hounds were often unable to keep a footing in the stream even where it was only a foot in depth, the pent up force of the lake seeming to burst itself forth violently over great masses of volcanic rock,

through the wooded chasm, until after a course of about a mile the river reaches the verdant meadows and wooded policies near the Bogton loch.

NOTE F.

*" They have come from Loch Doon and its waters blue,
From the isle where the osprey has chosen a home,
From those beautiful woods where the roedeer roam."*

Loch Doon is a very fine sheet of remarkably clear water, and extends for some seven miles in length, by about a mile or less in breadth. It divides the stewartry of Kirkcudbright from the county of Ayr, and was anciently nearly in the centre of the great forest of Buchan, so famous for royal sport. On the Carrick, or Ayrshire side of the lake, the mountains are remarkably wild in appearance, and abound in rock and heather, whilst the range of hills, known as the "Kells range," to the southward of the loch, are remarkably green and bright-looking to the eye.

There are two or three islets in the loch, one of which used to be known as the "Osprey's Isle," from the fact of the fishing eagle having built its nest there from time immemorial. During the last twenty years, however, the birds have disappeared, the island now passing under the name of the "Gulls' Isle," because the blackheaded gulls (*larus ridibundus*),* the only species of seagull that nests far from the sea, now breed upon it. They are protected by the Marquis of Ailsa, the proprietor. Roedeer are exceedingly numerous in the Ness Glen and the woods of Berbeth, where the author has often seen from twenty to thirty of them in one wood, on an autumn evening, going to drink at the loch.

In the dry summer of 1826, nine canoes or boats, several of which are to this day preserved sunk in a little pond in the wood at the head of the Ness Glen, were discovered in

* These gulls are locally termed "peck-mires," as they follow the plough in search of food.

Loch Doon by a party of fishers. The canoes, which I have seen, were observed beneath the water, sunk not far from the "Castle Island." Each was formed of a single oak tree, hollowed out (doubtless by "Celts") by hand, and shaped somewhat like a fishing-coble. I have little reason to doubt that these boats were once used by the people who inhabited the castle. One of them measured twenty feet in length by three feet three inches in breadth; a second was sixteen and a half feet long, by two feet six inches; a third being twenty-two feet long by three feet ten inches. One of them still exists in Glasgow Museum. A battle-axe, and a portion of a lady's shoe, the sole of the latter being entire, were found at the bottom of one of the boats. This relic was long in the possession of the late Mr. Train, of Newtown Stewart, who was a valued correspondent and friend of Sir Walter Scott. The boats are supposed to have lain in the loch for 800 or 900 years, so this leads me to think they were used by a still earlier people than the castle inmates.

NOTE G.

*"When he wing'd to his home on the Carlin's grey cairn,
To the nest where he carried the warrior's bairn."*

The lofty and rugged hill, known as the "Carlin's (or Witches') Cairn," is a noticeable mountain of the Kells Range, of 2,650 feet in height, on the Galloway side of the lake, and whence an extensive view embracing the Irish coast, the Isle of Man, Ailsa Craig, the Cumberland hills, and the Highlands nearly as far as Stirling, is obtained: it is, however, a rugged climb to the summit. Here is erected a fine cairn of rocks and large stones, to which a tradition attaches. According to the "Unique Traditions of Galloway," and the present belief of the neighbouring shepherds and cottars, this cairn was erected by the good wife of the miller of the farm of Polmaddy, towards the end of Robert the Bruce's reign. The King, it would appear, was, at the

time of his meeting this good woman, a fugitive from the English, and was hotly pursued by them. He sought shelter at the mill, where the good-wife concealed her royal guest behind the "happer" of the mill amongst the corn sacks. The soldiers came up shortly afterwards, but failed to find the Bruce. In happier days the King was able to reward his kind protectress with a grant of land near Polmaddy. In return for this the good dame wished to raise a monument to the memory of the King; so she brought together all her loyal neighbours and acquaintances, and caused them to collect and carry up to the highest part of the "Kells Rhynns," in full view over Carrick, large stones, with which they built the Carlin's Cairn, in memory of the Bruce's kindness to the miller's dame of Polmaddy.

There is an old tradition on the banks of Loch Doon that an eagle once carried off a child from the castle island, or from the shores, and bore it away to its eerie on the Carlin's Cairn, whence it was eventually rescued by its almost desperate mother.

NOTE II.

"'Neath the walls of the Castle of Doon."

About midway between the Carrick and the Galloway shores, toward the western extremity of the lake, is a small island, on which are the remains, though in a sadly dilapidated state, of an ancient castle. The castle is built in octagonal form, and being erected on a very rocky foundation and surrounded as it was by the deep waters of the loch, it must have been a fortalice of much strength, if not indeed, before the invention of artillery, impregnable. It goes by the name of Bruce's Castle, or sometimes Baliol Castle, but there appears to be no very satisfactory account of the date of its erection, nor of its original owners.

There is, however, little doubt but that it was a fortress of the ancient rulers, or "lords" of Carrick, and it was held

for the Bruce's cause against the English, on one, if not on two occasions. On one of these, the defenders of the Castle of Doon sallied forth, and valiantly attacked and defeated the enemy upon a hill, nearly opposite the Castle, which to this day is called by the peasantry the "Brucean hill."

Tytler ("History of Scotland," vol. i. p. 214, 215) says that shortly after the disastrous battle of Methven, in 1306, the troops of the Earl of Pembroke took prisoners, whilst scouring the country far and wide, many of the Scottish leaders, amongst whom were Lamberton, bishop of St. Andrew's, and the Abbot of Scone, who were discovered clad in their armour, in which they were conveyed to England. One of the next victims was Christopher de Seton, "who had married a sister of Bruce, and had rendered essential service to the king," and who now "took refuge in his castle of Loch Don, in Ayrshire, which is said to have been pusillanimously given up to the English by Sir Gilbert de Carrick." (Robertson's "Index," pp. 135—8: notes and illustrations, letter X.) Seton, who was a great favourite with the people, was especially obnoxious to Edward, as he had been personally present at the death of Comyn. He was immediately hurried to Dumfries, and condemned and hanged as a traitor. So dear to King Robert was the memory of this faithful friend and fellow-warrior, that he afterwards erected on the spot where he was executed a little chapel, where mass was said for his soul. ("Statistical Account," vol. v., pp. 141—142.) Sir Christopher's brother, John de Seton, was taken about the same time, and put to death at Newcastle. Sir Christopher de Seton was ordered to be hanged and then beheaded, at Dumfries, where "the dread apparatus of death was erected on a high natural eminence situated beyond the walls, on the north-east of the Burgh, so that the inhabitants might have an opportunity of seeing how the usurper rewarded what his judges called rebellion, and of profiting by the spectacle." (McDowall's "Hist. of Dumfries," p. 106.) Whether Seton's widow, Christian Bruce, or her royal brother the King himself, built the chapel, will never be known for certain, but, at any rate, Christian

"founded" it, as set forth by Robert the Bruce's charter, dated November 31, 1323, when he was undisputed monarch of Scotland. The charter (General Hutton's Manuscript, in Advocates' Library, Edinburgh), commences: "Charta Capellani celebrantis pro anima Christopheris de Seton. Robertus, Dei gratia Rex Scotorum," &c., and sets forth that, whereas "Christopher de Seton, our beloved soldier, having been put to death in our service, and our dear sister Christian, his spouse, having on the place where he suffered death, near Dumfries, founded a certain chapel in honour of the Holy Rood, be it known unto her, that for the favour and affection borne by us to the said Christopher in his life, we have given and confirmed to a chaplain, in the same chapel, to celebrate mass for ever for the soul of the said Christopher, one hundred shillings sterling (centum solidos strivling), of annual value; the same to be payable by the hands of our Sheriff of Dumfries and his bailies from the rents of Carlaverock, at Witsunday and Martinmas, in equal proportions." St. Christopher's chapel is stated to have been "A beautiful little gothic building of oblong shape, cornered by pointed buttresses, and having a richly decorated oriel window." (McDowall, l. c.)

NOTE I.

*"They have look'd on the Millfore, all dreary and cold,
And the dark Craig of Dee, so fantastic and bold."*

The mountains in this desolate region are of great beauty, but the scenery around them is wild in the extreme, as much so as in any part of the highlands proper with which I am acquainted. These mountains have, for the most part, purely Gallic names, as for instance, the Millfore (Gallic, *Meall Fuar*), signifying "the cold hill." Cairngarrock, Curleywee, Benyellary, and Brockloch are all of Gallic origin. The Black Craig o' Dee, or Cairnsmore o' Dee (as it is also called), is clad with dark heather to its very summit, giving the moun-

tain a peculiarly sombre appearance, relieved, however, by the numerous crystals on its crest, which, after a shower of rain, sparkle brightly in the rays of the sun.

NOTE J.

*"Where the Dungeon of Buchan its summit uprears,
And the Merrick gigantic, in glory appears."*

Sir Andrew Agnew, of Lochnaw, speaking of these wild solitudes, says : "The Dungeon of Buchan and the Mearoch were the most prominent features in these mountain scenes, among whose wild retreats, as late as 1684, Symson writes, 'are *very large* red-deer, and about the top thereof that fine bird called the mountain partridge, or, by the commonalty the *tar machan*, about the size of a red cock, and its flesh much of the same nature ; it feeds, as that bird doth, on the seeds of the bulrush, and makes its protection in the chinks and hollow-places of thick stones from the insults of the eagles, which are in plenty, both the large grey and the black, about that mountain.' A ptarmigan is said to have been shot upon this hill, now the property of the Earl of Galloway, as late as the year 1820 (Agnew's "Hereditary Sheriffs of Galloway," pp. 138, 139). The Merrick is the most lofty hill, not only in Galloway or Ayrshire, but south of the Grampians, its height being 2,760 feet. To the geologist this whole district is wonderfully interesting, and curiously enough, the "till" or "boulder clay," is abundant in this region ; the Merrick itself is a notable example of a clay-covered mountain, a thick covering, or layer, of till extending to its summit ! Mr. Jolly, in describing the glacier *débris* found in this, the highest district of the south of Scotland, states (Harper's "Rambles in Galloway") that a deep deposit of this boulder-clay is to be seen upon the shoulder of the Merrick, just "behind the shepherd's hut at Culsharg, the highest inhabited dwelling in Galloway, remarkable as occurring so near the highest point of the

southern highlands. Here a deposit of great thickness fills up a pre-glacial valley, through which the present streamlet has cut a deep gully, the banks of *débris* rising at an acute angle from the water, several fine 'morasses' are to be seen here, and extraordinary numbers of large boulders, or 'perched' blocks of rock, especially around Loch Valley, and also upon the very highest crest of the Merrick. These 'rocking stones,' as many of them are, and which sway to and fro when touched by the hand of man, are regarded (by the geologist before alluded to) as poised naturally, their exquisite balance being due to weathering of the rock, motion by the winds, and the necessary keeping of the centre of gravity where the mass has been sufficient to resist the tempests."

NOTE K.

*"To grey Millyea with its rampart of rocks,
The home of the badger, the wolf, and the fox."*

The steep hill of Millyea to this day gives a safe asylum to both the badger, the fox, the buzzard, and the raven. The Gallic name of this mountain is "Meall Liath," which signifies the "grey hill."

NOTE L.

*"Let Agnes seek the paddles three,
Conceal'd beneath the Druids' tree."*

There is no doubt, notwithstanding the opinion of some writers to the contrary, that the Druids were spread over the whole of Galloway and Ayrshire, in common with many other parts of Scotland, Wales, and the south of England. The ancient Roman historians, to whom we are chiefly indebted for anything we know upon this subject, do not mention Galloway especially, but their writings lead one to believe that Druidism was the religion of all Scotland at that

period of history. Even royal princes (according to Hollinshed, "Scot: Chronicles," sixteenth century) brought up their sons to learn the doctrines of this religion; this historian instancing a prince who sent his sons for that purpose to the Isle of Man. A course of Druidical education embraced all the sciences, and often occupied twenty years before the pupil became certified. ("Caledonia.")

In proof of the assertion that Druidism was very widespread, the following may be quoted from Dr. Bryce-Johnston's account of the parish of Holywood, in Dumfriesshire. "Statistical Account," vol. i. p. 18. "Holywood is evidently derived from the holy wood, or grove of oak trees, which surrounded a large Druidical temple, still standing within half a mile of the parish church. It is formed of twelve very large whin or moor stones, as they are called, which inclose a circular piece of ground, of about eighty yards in diameter. The oaks have all now perished; but there is a tradition of their existing in the last age. Many of their roots have been dug out of the ground by the present minister, and he has still one of them in his possession."

On Captain Basil Hall's asking Sir Walter Scott, at Abbotsford, in 1824, the name of a certain spot, the poet replied it was called "Haxel Cleugh," and added that he was long puzzled to find the etymology of the name, and all that was known regarding the spot was the tradition which existed of there having been a Druidical temple there once. "At length," to use Sir Walter's own words, "when I was reading very early one fine summer's morning, I accidentally lighted on a passage in some German book, which stated Haxa was the old German term for a Druidess. Here, then, was the mystery solved" ("Lockhart's Life of Scott," vol. v. p. 377). *Hexe* is the modern German for a witch.

Tumuli and cairns are to be seen in nearly every parish of Ayr, Dumfries, and Galloway; such, for instance, having their names perpetuated, as Cairn-holy, Grey-cairn, White-cairn, and Cairn-narran, in Inch parish, Wigtonshire, where are no less than nine grey cairns. In the parishes of Parton and Dalry and Carsphairn, Kirkcudbrightshire, are very fine

examples of either cairns or of circles of "standing stones." But perhaps the finest in the district exists at Tarhouse, some three miles from the town of Wigtown. This circle of huge stones consists of nineteen separate blocks, with three others in its centre, standing in a line from east to west. Symson, "A large Description of Galloway," p. 56, writing about two hundred years ago, says: "There is a plaine called the Moor, or standing-stones of Tarhouse, in which there is a monument of three large whinstones, call'd King Galdus's tomb, surrounded at about twenty foot distance with nineteen great stones (but none of them so great as the three first mentioned) erected in the circumference." Most writers and also the majority of the antiquaries regard the circle as of Druidical origin. It may be mentioned, however, that King Galdus fell in battle with the Romans, so that it may have been erected as a memorial to him, and afterwards have served the purposes of the Druids. Oaks, still called "Druids' trees," exist in many parts of the country, but of course cannot be the originals under which the wild orgies and sacrifices of the priests were held.

NOTE M.

*"Gilbert Haye, that warrior's name,
That lady—Lady Alice Graem."*

The ancient family of Hay, or De la Haye, were amongst the most devoted of the Bruce's followers, and shared the King's confidence and love. At the commencement of the struggle for independence, there were with Robert Bruce, in the island of Rathlin, in the winter of 1306-7, the two brothers, Gilbert de la Haye of Errol, and Hugh de la Haye, together with many others. Hugh de la Haye, with Thomas Somerville of Lintoun, ancestor of Lord Somerville, were both taken prisoners by the English at the disastrous battle of Methven, but neither were executed at the time.

Barbour speaks of Gilbert as

"Schyr Gilbert de la Haye alsua."

Robert Bruce rewarded him by creating him the hereditary Lord High Constable of Scotland, "a title which he used 16th March, 1308, where, in a letter from the peers of Scotland to Philip the Fair of France, he is designed *Gilbertus de Hay, Constabularius Scotiæ*. He was slain at the battle of Halidoun hill." (Notes to "Lord of the Isles," Canto II.)

Hew de la Haye was the brother, as previously mentioned, of the Earl of Errol; and, says Dr. Jamieson (notes to Barbour's "Bruce," book II., p. 429), this family "was palpably of Norman extract, *De la Haye*, 'of the hedge,' in spite of Boyce's fables concerning it and Douglas. The story of the name having originated from the old man crying out from fatigue, after the battle of Luncarty, *Hay, hay!* is evidently absurd. But from the lands, armorial bearings, &c., it seems probable that some person of this name distinguished himself in that memorable action."

With regard to Lady Alice Graem, I have to admit that I have created this personage in the poem, because many ladies, whose names were not preserved to History, were with the Bruce during his wanderings in 1306-7-8, in Galloway, Ayr, and also in the Highlands. "There was," says Fraser Tytler ("History of Scotland," vol. i. p. 220), "a romantic interest about Bruce's fortunes, which had a powerful effect upon the female mind, and the hero seems to have availed himself of this influence.* He had already received assistance from the Countess of Buchan and Christina of the Isles; and now, on hearing of his success in Carrick, he was joined by a lady, nearly related to him, but whose name has been lost. She brought him, however, a seasonable supply of money and provisions, and a reinforcement of forty men. From her, too, he first learnt the miserable fate of Seton, Athole, and the garrison of Kildrummie, and, during the recital, is said to have vowed deeply that their deaths should not go unrevenged." There is thus little reason for our doubting that ladies were with the patriot during these troublous years, and dwelt in the numerous mountain caves.

* Barbour, Jamieson's edition (Book IV., line 541, *et seq.*).

NOTE N.

*"But long in Buchan's forest grown,
Until by wintry blast o'erthrown."*

The far-stretching tract of land known in the Bruce's time as the "forest of Buchan," lay partly in Kirkcudbrightshire and partly in Ayrshire. It "occupied an immense area, including large tracts in the parishes of Straiton, Dalmellington, Carsphairn, Muinigaff, and New Galloway. From Loch Doon it extended by Carsphairn and Loch Dee to Loch Trool, and thence to the water of Cree. The following modern farms were, A.D. 1500, all included in the forest :— The farm of Buchan (the house of which stands on Loch Trool), of 9,999 acres in extent ; the shepherds call it the "four nines." There were also Portmark, Arrow, Lamloch, Lochhead, the Star, Shalloch o' Muinloch, Tarfessoch, Palgowan, Stroan, Dungeon of Buchan, Glenhead, Garrary, Castle Maddy, the Bush, the Cowering Lane, Poomaddy,* and others, over which the Cassilis family then ranged as undisputed owners. Much of the so-called forest was bare, rocky heath, but there was also a great extent of wood. There were in it also some rich and well-sheltered pasturages, and many beautiful glens, the whole abounding in game.

"Lord Kennedy delighted in the title of 'Ranger of the Forest of Buchan,' and a nobler field for the wild sports of the chiefs of former days could hardly be imagined. Many hunting-lodges were here kept up for his convenience, of which, to this day, there are numerous remains. Of these, his favourite stood under the Dungeon of Buchan, on a pretty green knoll surrounded by three small lakes ; it was called Hunt Hall, and a choice spot it was for a sporting rendezvous. Garrary was another of his haunts, and also Poomaddy, where shepherds still tell the tale that the food for Cassilis's hounds was prepared in former days.

"The limits of the forest gradually contracted, and, in the seventeenth century, that part lying in the parish of Muinigaff

* Now Polmaddy.

alone retained the name. There is a procuratory of resignation by which 'the free Forest of Buchan, is granted by John, sixth Earl of Cassilis, to John Gordon of Lochinvar, dated 11th February, 1628,* all of which is now the property of the Earl of Galloway. In the days of which we write, the forest existed (about the year 1500) in its full glory, and its borders marched with many of the lands of the Laird of Lochinvar; causes for feud were seldom wanting between the Gordons and the Kennedys (Agnew's 'Hereditary Sheriffs,' p. 138). The forest held very large red deer, wild boars, roedeer, foxes, wolves, otters, white and red grouse, black game, and probably the mighty elk, horns approaching the shape and size of which have from time to time been found amongst the peat-bogs, little the worse for their long immersion in the soft soil.

"So powerful were the Earls of Cassilis in former days, and so numerous the various branches of the Kennedy clan, that the following rhyme was used as a proverb throughout the south of Scotland in connection with their great power:—

"'Twixt Wigton and the town of Air,
Portpatrick and the Cruives † of Cree,
No man need think for to 'bide there
Unless he court with Kennedie.'"

SYMSON'S *Large Description of Galloway*, p. 80.

As may be well imagined, a good deal of litigation used to take place as to the ownership of some of these wild forest lands, and tradition hath it that at a certain trial one of Lord Ailsa's witnesses, who was a Maybole weaver, distinguished himself by swearing that, on the disputed spot, he was standing on Lord Ailsa's ground. The only truth in the statement was that he had placed some earth in the boots he had on his feet, and swore on his *sole*!

NOTE O.

"*In Caldons's woods that lately grew.*"

The beautiful woods of Caldons, close to the loch of Trool, formed essentially part of the forest of Buchan, and abound in

* Mackenzie.

† "Cruives"—windings.

memorials of the times of the persecution of the Covenanters. In a small open clearing amongst the oaks and silver birches, where once a dwelling-house stood, whose stones still lie in a heap, is the grave of the six heroic martyrs who fell on the spot. "Where they fell they were buried. Quite a melancholy interest invests the lone sequestered spot. Nothing marked their place of sepulture until, about the middle of last century, Old Mortality erected over their common grave the first monumental stone of his chisel. It is a small stone about three feet high by two feet broad, and is carved in the usual primitive rudeness which distinguishes the most of his works. Its whole style, however, accords well with the scene and the association. It bears the following inscription, the letters being carved in the antique connected style :—

"Here lyes
James and Robert
Duns, Thomas and
John Stevensons,
James McClive,
Andreu McCall, who
were surprised
at prayer in this
House, by Colnell
Douglas, Lievtnant
Livingston and"

Turning to the back of the stone the inscription proceeds :—

"Cornet
James Douglas, and
by them most impious-
-ly and cruelly
murthered for their
adherence to Scot-
-lands Reformation
Covenants National
and Solemn League,
1685."

WAUGH'S *Galloway Glimpses*, p. 20.

These six unfortunate martyrs were thus cruelly slain by the troop of dragoons, but one of their party managed to effect an escape in a marvellous manner, by jumping into the lake, and keeping his body concealed below the surface, while he covered his head with a bush of heather, so that he was unseen by the infuriated soldiers, two of whom were also killed. One of their officers, a Captain Urquhart, was slain, according to the tradition, under rather curious circumstances. On the way to the Loch of Trool, the same morning, the difficulties of the road had so exasperated him that he swore a fearful oath to be revenged on the unlucky Covenanters. He dreamed that he would meet his fate at a spot called the "Caldons," and it was whilst he was riding up to a cottage of a shepherd to inquire the whereabouts of the fugitives, that he asked the name by which the place went. On receiving the reply, he drew up his charger, uncertain whether to retire or advance, at the same time uttering a loud oath, and at this instant a shot fired from a window told on him with fatal effect.

Symson (l. c.) observes "that morning Captain Orchar had that expression, that being so angry with the badness of the way, he wished the Devil might make his ribs a boiling iron to his soul, if he should not be revenged on the Whiggies!"

NOTE P.

*"As summon'd Bruce a favourite slave,
Who hurries, at the royal call,
From out a little inner hall."*

In the time in which the story of the poem is laid, every baron was surrounded by lesser officers, soldiers, and retainers, and all possessed slaves. Slaves, or bondmen, as they were also termed, were either those prisoners captured in battle, or the posterity of those who had been so taken, and who had died in captivity. "They were often bought and sold with the land on which they resided, but sometimes without it. Their master possessed the same right of property over their persons that he had over the cattle that belonged to his estate. They could not remove without his permission, and his right

of property continued attached to them wherever they went ; he could reclaim them with as much facility as he could seize upon the animals which had strayed from his domain. The whole effects of slaves belonged to their masters. This degraded class of men were never allowed to arm, and they could not hold any office. The laws of the country protected their lives, but in every other respect they remained at the absolute disposal, and entirely at the mercy of their lords. A bondman received his liberty after having possessed unquestioned freedom upon any estate in the country for seven years, and within any burgh for a year and a day. Slavery continued in full force in England until so late as the year 1536 ; though in Scotland it appears to have been abolished at an earlier date (" Hist. of Galloway," vol. i. pp. 238, 239).

One of these superior barons in truth was, in these days, a miniature king, and also invariably acted in the capacity of criminal judge, and imposed all penalties upon his own people, even to the immuring them in dungeons, and awarding capital punishment. Every baron possessed his gallows and "murder-hole," the former for hanging male offenders, the latter for drowning women. These pits were filled with water. Some of the *murder-holes* or pits, are said to be eighty feet deep, from which human bones have been brought forth, and their origin has been referred to the feudal grants, which were conferred on so many barons, of having and using "pit and gallows." "Pit," says Skene, "is a hole, wherein the Scots used to drown *women thieves*." ("Caledonia.")

NOTE Q.

*"As when they drove the pirate Dane
Defeated to his shores again ;
Or how, when sail'd the Northman o'er,
And thought to land on Scottish shore,
They sank their galleys 'neath the wave,
And gave the foe a watery grave."*

The district of Galloway, with the coast of Carrick, was, from its position by the sea-shore, very favourable for the

landing of an enemy, and of this the Norsemen often took advantage. Magnus, King of Norway, landed in the year 1098, and erected on the precipitous shore the Castles of Burgh-head and Castle-feather, with others whose names are lost sight of, and from the magnitude of these buildings it was evident the Norsemen intended to keep possession of the country. His rule was not a long one, however, as he met with the fate due to his crimes in 1103, in the North. The Danes also from time to time made piratical descents upon the coasts of south-western Scotland, but King Haco of Norway, and Olave the "swarthy," or "black King of Man," joined their forces about 1260, and invaded Cantire, taking the Castle of Bute, and laying the people under heavy contributions. In this engagement the Norwegians and the Islanders together lost several ships and over three hundred men (Abercromby's "Martial Achievements of the Scots"). There are to this day abundant evidences of the Danish occupation of this part of the country, temporary though it generally seems to have been. The words still remaining in use, and which are undoubtedly Danish, are *fell* (a hill), and *scun* (discernment), derived from *skoem* (judgment).

The great battle on the sea-shore at Largs, in Ayrshire, fought between Haco of Norway and Alexander III. of Scotland, took place on October 2nd, 1263, in which (the fine fleet of the Norwegians having been terribly beaten about on the night preceding the battle), the invaders were driven from the shore back to their vessels, with terrible slaughter, and with the loss of most of their bravest leaders.

NOTE R.

*"How the glorious Wallace won
The ancient fort of Cruggleton,
That high upon its rugged rock
Had long withstood the battle shock."*

The taking of the Castle of Cruggleton, a very strong fortress built upon a massive rock overlooking Wigtown Bay, forms one of the most gallant and exciting episodes in the

great patriot William Wallace's history. The Castle was built in the course of the twelfth century, or perhaps at a far earlier date. There can be little doubt that it was erected by the Sea-Kings, and the materials of which it is built must have been brought from a distance, no similar stone being found in Galloway. Greater enlightenment on the subject can be obtained by reference to Professor Munch, of Christiania, in his "*Chronica Regum Manniæ and Insularum*" (published in 1860, with accounts taken from the long lost "*Codex Flateyensis*"). There can be no question that Earl Malcolm (there were two Earls of this name, both called kings of Scotland) resided in about the middle of the eleventh century in one of the large castles built by the Norsemen "near Whitherne" (*vide* the work referred to).

I am indebted to Mr. P. H. Mc.Kerlie, F.S.A. Scot., a representative of one of the most ancient families in Galloway, for obligingly giving me these particulars concerning the Castle of Cruggleton, in the taking of which by Wallace, Steven and Kerlie (or Mc.Kerlie), the latter of which heroes was his ancestor, this gentleman is naturally much interested. From every point of view, then, taking into consideration the size and extent of Cruggleton Castle, there is every probability for believing that it was occupied by Malcolm. The precipice, immediately overlooking the ocean beneath, is fully 200 feet in height, and the castle, which stood upon its brow, occupied about one and a half acres of ground. "Within the walls, which were battlemented, there was a courtyard; and buildings with eight towers. Another wall lined the interior side of the fosse or moat, fifty feet wide, and very deep, over which there was a drawbridge. The gate was strongly fortified, with a guardhouse over it, and portcullis. Landward it was thus, in these times, considered impregnable. On the other side the sea made it equally so. Immediately under the Castle there was a landing-place where vessels of small burden could be drawn up and secured in tempestuous weather. The means of communication was by a path up the precipice, intersected at the harbour by a gate, having a small guardhouse over it, and defended by a portcullis, &c. The

path then ascended in a winding direction, and at the battlemented wall was another gate, fortified in the same way. There is every reason to believe that Carolton and Cruggleton were both possessed for some time together, and that the latter was taken from the Norsemen by the Carrols. Different attempts by the Norsemen to retake the Castle appear to have been made, but all without success.

"After the death of King David, a desperate descent was made by the Norsemen to recover their supremacy in Galloway, but they were defeated by the Galwegians." This is supposed to have occurred in 1154. It was during one of these sudden attacks of the Northern warriors that gave rise to the interesting tradition of the old boatman. "As related, the Norsemen, finding it impossible to retake the Castle of Cruggleton by open assault, tried to do so by strategy. The fleet kept hovering about the coast, and on what was thought a favourable opportunity an old man stealthily approached the castle in a boat, bearing the dreaded flag of Denmark. This was the famous Reafen, or enchanted standard, in the powers of which the Norsemen implicitly believed as carrying conquest. It contained the figure of a raven, which had been inwoven by the three sisters of Hingnar and Hubba, with many incantations. The object was to gain access close to, or if possible, on the ramparts, unfurl and wave the standard when the garrison would have become powerless, and those in ambush would have immediately taken the fortress. The Carrols were, however, too much on the alert to allow of this, and before the boatman could perform his perilous task, he and his standard were seized, and the latter committed to the flames in the courtyard. For long afterwards, as these superstitious times have handed down, the old boatman, with his standard, annually appeared on the ramparts, and after waving it, they both vanished in thin air. About three centuries previously, King Alfred of England is said to have captured a similar standard in Devonshire. From our Galloway tradition, the Danes must have recovered it, or got another."

The Carrols, or Kerlies, seem to have possessed the castle

for about two centuries, defying the Norsemen the while, when in or about the year 1282, Lord Soulis (probably Sir John) visited William Carrol, the then possessor, upon an ostensibly friendly footing. He, however, treacherously brought a large armed force inside the walls, overpowered the garrison, and took the castle, Carrol effecting his escape. John Comyn, the Earl of Buchan, held the castle in 1292, in the name of Edward I. of England, and in 1296, Henry de Percy was the owner, followed in the next year by John of Hoddleston. In 1297, the glorious Wallace, accompanied by William Kerlie (or Carrol) and Stephen of Ireland, two of his most devoted followers, was successful in capturing the Castle of Wigtown from the English. The popular tradition I have always heard in the immediate vicinity of the Castle of Cruggleton is to the effect that these three gallant men *swam* over to the castle-rock, under cover of darkness, and then climbed the precipice. However that may be, I will transcribe Mr. McKerlie's account. "They must have approached the Castle from the bay of Cruggleton or Rigge, in a boat, the promontory concealing their approach. This was at nightfall. Previously a body of men had been placed in ambush on the landward side. Wallace, Kerlie, and Stephen of Ireland went by themselves, and evidently got out of the boat on to the precipice, where the water is deep, for the description given states 'the water under.' Further to the west, at very low tides, there is a little space left where men could walk on the rocks, and get to a part easier to climb; but then at that time discovery was certain, and the assault would have failed. Besides, it is dangerous, from the rapidity with which the tides rise on that coast. The place where the gallant trio must have climbed shows what men they were. The apparent impossibility was the cause of their success, for it could not have been guarded like the other parts of the ramparts. However, they not only climbed the dangerous precipice in safety, but got over the ramparts, killed the warder, raised the portcullis, let down the drawbridge, and opened the gate, when Wallace blew his horn and those in ambush rushed in." "The English garrison of sixty men were thus surprised, over-

powered, and all put to the sword, a priest and two women only having been spared."

NOTE S.

*"And the waves of the Solway shall crimson with blood,
For thousands shall drown 'neath her merciless flood."*

From the very earliest times the Solway Firth has been dreaded for the extraordinary rapidity with which the strong tides ebb and flow over its wide-stretching sands, where quicksands are by no means rare. The numerous and conflicting currents which meet near the mouth of the rivers Esk, Nith, and Annan, combine to keep up a perpetual and ever-changing tumult of its waters. "Twice in every twenty-four hours the tidal flow, suddenly raised above its ordinary level, rendered fierce by the tumult, seeks an outvent at the estuary, through which it rushes with a speed that is nowhere rivalled in the United Kingdom, or perhaps in the world. It hurries on, carrying a head four to six feet high, filling up the tortuous channels, and sweeping over the broad level beds of the Frith with a rapidity that has earned for its foam-crested billows the title of the 'white steeds of the Solway.'" (McDowall's "History of Dumfries," p. 523.) Many and many a life has been thrown away on its dangerous sands, and I have often heard the peasants on the Solway shores say, that the tide comes in as fast as a good horse can gallop, and I believe it sometimes to be the case. When serious floods, especially in winter time, take place in the rivers, the Solway is proportionately swelled, and high tides cause disastrous inundations on the low-lying lands. Well might Sir Walter Scott say,

"Love swells like the Solway, but ebbs like its tide."

Marmion.

NOTE T.

"On the braes of the Sark."

A little stream flowing into the Solway, and dividing the two countries of England and Scotland. From its thus form-

ing debatable land, many a bloody fight took place in old days upon its steep banks. In a very dry summer it almost ceases to exist; taking its rise about ten miles from the sea, its source lying amongst the lower slopes of the Eskdale hills. In 1449, the engagement known as the battle of Sark was fought between the English army, some 20,000 or perhaps more in number, commanded by the Earl of Northumberland and his son, and the Scotch under Douglas's brother, George, Earl of Ormond, in number 12,000 men. It was the greatest and most bloody battle ever fought in Dumfriesshire since the Scottish monarchy had been formed. Most of the Scotch were armed with spikes and spears, the national weapon at that period, whilst their foe were mainly archers. Over three thousand English were slaughtered on the field, and more than this number fell by the sword of the pursuers when they fled to the banks of the Sark, which was now swollen by the incoming of the tide of the Solway, and beneath whose fiercely-flowing waters hundreds found a watery grave. The English had held, on the previous day, high wassail on its shores. A full and graphic account of this battle will be found in Buchanan and Pitscottie's works.

NOTE U.

"And the moss by the Lochar be purple with gore."

The well-known morass that goes by the name of Lochar-moss is a widely stretching flat of some ten miles in length, by two or three in breadth, which lies alongside the Solway in a northerly direction, stretching towards the town of Dumfries. It is nearly a dead level, and takes its name from a very sluggish stream, called the Lochar, flowing as nearly as possible through its centre. According to tradition it was in very ancient days an immense forest; next, the ocean flows over it, converting it into a bay up which vessels could sail almost to its head. Then it is supposed to have become choked by the wreck of vegetation, and by the sands deposited by the tides of the Solway, thus eventually being transformed into a bog,

which it remains, though cultivated here and there on its outskirts, to the present day. A very thick stratum of sea-sand lies below the surface of the moss, mixed with shells; and many large fragments of ancient ships and canoes have been dug from this stratum, as well as iron anchors and grapples, proving it once to have been navigable. Large trees have been excavated from the bog; chiefly fir, but also hazel, oaks, and birches. The Nith is supposed to have once flowed over this morass, and the old couplet of the peasants in the vicinity of the bog runs thus:—

“Once a wood, and then a sea;
Now a moss and aye shall be.”

Robert the Bruce, says tradition, was unable to cross the Locharmoss, when on his way to meet the Comyn at Dumfries, and was compelled to travel round by the Tinwald hills.

NOTES TO INTRODUCTION TO CANTO II.

NOTE A.

*“Perchance thy steps may roam with me
By ancient Castle Kennedy,
Where on the loch’s fair bosom wide
Ten thousand wavelets in their pride
Are dancing in the sun.”*

The very ancient building known as Castle Kennedy, not far distant from Stranraer, now in ruins, is the property of the Earl of Stair; the beautifully kept grounds around it, combined with its romantic site, and the natural beauty of the surrounding scenery, together make it one of the most beautiful and attractive spots in Galloway.

The first record of the property of Loch Inch, or Castle

Kennedy, is in the year 1482, when John, Lord Kennedy, who was son of Gilbert, by Catherine, daughter of the first Lord Maxwell of Caerlaverock, was appointed the "keeper of the manor, place, and loch of Inch." This Lord Kennedy's only son was afterwards created first Earl of Cassilis; hence, doubtless, the name of Castle Kennedy. The Castle itself was not finished in the year 1607, though there is, so far as I can find, no record of when it was commenced.

Symson, in his old "Galloway Description," observes that the castle "hath also gardens and orchards environed with the loch. On the other side of the loch, towards the north-west, stands the parish Kirk of the Inch, so-called from a little island, 'situated in the loch, a little way from the kirk; within this little island, also planted with trees, is a little house built, into which the late Earl of Cassilis used to retire himself *betwixt sermons*, having a boat for that purpose." Probably this was the sixth Earl of Cassilis, whose good lady was a daughter of the Earl of Haddington, and who is generally (though quite erroneously) supposed to be the heroine of the old ballad of "Johnie Faa," when the "hero,"—in the shape of Sir John Faw, her old lover,—comes to the Castle disguised as a gipsy, and persuades Cassilis's bride to elope with him.

"The gypsies came to our good lord's gate,
And, wow, but they sang sweetly;
They sang sae sweet and sae very complete,
That down came the fair lady.
O, come with me,' says Johnie Faw,
'O come with me, my dearie;
For I vow and I swear by the hilt of my sword,
That your lord shall nae mair come near ye.'"

The Earl, however, returned before the fugitives got far away, and having collected his vassals, he followed and came up with them, near the English border, when all were slain but one;—

"And we were fifteen wool-made men,
Altho' we were na bonny;
And we were a' put down but aye,
For a fair young wanton lady."

The Earl, on bringing back the fair fugitive, banished her *mensâ et thorb*, and, it is said, confined her for life in a tower at the village of Maybole, in Ayrshire, built for that purpose. (Finlay's "Scottish Ballads," vol ii.)

The Marquis of Ailsa informs me that this account, which has appeared in so many volumes of Scottish ballads, is entirely erroneous. The result of a search amongst the Kennedy family archives at Culzean Castle a few years ago established beyond a doubt that the Lady Cassilis in question never behaved as represented in the ballad, but lived and died at peace with her lord. The true story of "Johnnie Faa" will be found, on reference to the "Memorials of the Montgomeries, Earls of Eglinton," by my friend Mr. W. Fraser, LL.D., deputy keeper of the records at Edinburgh (Preface, pp. ix-xii).

The Dalrymples afterwards obtained possession of Loch Inch, and other lands, and in 1677, John Dalrymple, styled Sir John of Stair, got possession of a large tract of Wigtownshire lands that had belonged to the Kennedies. Castle Kennedy is historically interesting, for there King William took up his quarters, when he brought his fleet to Lochryan, on his way over to Ireland, where he soon after fought the famous battle of the Boyne.

In the year 1715, Castle Kennedy was accidentally burned, when valuable family papers were destroyed. The walls, still standing, are about seventy feet in height, and very picturesque.

NOTE B.

*" And e'en the inoffensive owl,—
A sad but frequent sight,
That fell to that unerring aim
Which might have sought a nobler game ! "*

It has ever been utterly incomprehensible to myself to observe the extraordinary conduct of the majority of gamekeepers, Scottish, English, and Irish, with regard to the poor

harmless owl ! Everyone, I conclude, is aware that the owl seeks its prey at night, when all game-birds are, or ought to be, safely asleep ; very rarely being abroad by day. Their food, too, is principally mice, small rats, beetles, and the like ; yet does one see these unfortunate, persecuted birds swinging in the breeze, strung up on every " keeper's gibbet tree ! " Personally, I am fully convinced of their utility. Let me be forgiven if I offer one instance of this.

When I was residing, in 1879, at Dunskey, in Wigtownshire, I knew, personally, of no less than *sixteen* nests, with eggs or young, in the month of April, in the *one* large wood surrounding the house, and of the shooting of which I was the tenant. These were all nests of the short-eared owl, which is brown in colour. There were, no doubt, many other nests of owls which I did not discover. Under the trees on which their nests were built, were countless pellets ejected by the birds, and each one of which contained the skulls, bones, and hair of several mice ! I constantly watched the pair of old owls carrying mice to their young, of which there was an average of six to each nest. As far as I could count each pair of birds would kill twenty mice per day, and as they fed their young for a period of about three months, the number of mice destroyed on that portion of the estate alone would amount in that time to some 28,800 mice ! Who, I ask, would shoot an owl again ?

NOTE C.

*" And pause we where thy braes, Glen App,
Rise proudly from old ocean's lap."*

The beautifully picturesque valley, with its surrounding hills or rather heath-clad mountains, known as Glen App, rises from the sea-shore, at the very northern end of Loch Ryan, and may be said to form the division between Ayrshire and the district of Galloway. An ancient and favourite after-dinner toast in assemblies of Gallovidians in all parts of the

world is, "The health of a' the wives, weans, an lassies o' Galloway frae the Brig en' o' Dumfries to the Braes o' Glen App!"

Glen App is also celebrated for the famous and wondrous feats of Saint Patrick! "Once, when about to revisit his native land, he crossed the channel at a stride, leaving the mark of his foot distinctly impressed on one of the rocks of the harbour (of Port Patrick): unfortunately, in making a new jetty, this interesting memento was destroyed." He, however, performed on returning to Scotland, a far more wonderful feat. "Having preached to an assembly on the borders of Ayrshire, the barbarous people seized him, and, amidst shouts of savage glee, struck his head from his body in Glen App: the good man submitted meekly to the operation; but no sooner was it over than he picked up his own head, and passing through the crowd, walked back to Port Patrick; but finding no boat ready to sail, he boldly breasted the waves and swam across to the opposite shore, where he safely arrived (according to the unanimous testimony of Irishmen innumerable) holding *his head between his teeth!*" (Sir Andrew Agnew's "Hereditary Sheriffs.")

NOTE D.

*"And well 'tis known, each Hallow-e'en
Their ladies, dress'd in gold and green,
Dance gay with circling tread.
The marks of whom thou still may'st see,
If o'er the wilds thou roam'st with me,
In many a flow'ry mead."*

The belief in fairies, goblins, and the "little folk," was universal in the South of Scotland, and to a great extent still exists. They hold their special feasts and dances at Hallow-e'en. Everyone is familiar with those large circles in woods, pastures, and even on the moors, with rows of toadstools growing around them. These are supposed to be made by the fairies dancing.

NOTES TO CANTO II.

NOTE A.

*"But still a ling'ring crimson ray
Falls soft on Garlies' Tower."*

The Stewarts of Garlies are one of the most ancient families in the south-west of Scotland, and one of their first, if not the first, residences in Galloway appears to have been the tower or castle of Garlies, a short distance from the river Cree, where the modern town of Newton Stewart (originally New-town Douglas, but changed to its present designation soon after it was founded) now stands. This little town occupies one of the most beautiful situations in the land, environed as it is by the most glorious mountains, situated in a warm and pleasant valley, and enjoying a genial and comparatively warm climate.

The first known of the family of Stewart is supposed to have been one Alan, a Norman, son of Flaad, who obtained the barony of Oswestry, in Shropshire, from William the Conqueror. From his second son the Royal family of Scotland descend : he was appointed steward, or meat-bearer, to the Royal household by David I., and from this individual descended Alexander, sixth lord High Steward of Scotland, who obtained a grant of the Barony of Garlies on 30th November, 1263, in reward, probably, for having shortly before greatly distinguished himself in the victory at Largs, in Ayrshire, over the Norsemen. He married Jean, daughter of James, grandson of Somerled, Earl of Bute ; and their issue were as follows : (1) James, seventh Lord High Steward of Scotland, grandfather of King Robert II., and ancestor consequently of the entire royal line of Stewart or Stuart. (2) John, who obtained the lands of Garlies from his father, and who was eventually slain at the battle of Falkirk, fighting

under the patriot William Wallace. His issue were:—Sir Alexander, first Earl of Angus; Sir Alan, ancestor of the Stewards of Darnley, Earls and Dukes of Lennox; and Sir Walter, who obtained the lands of Dalswinton, in Nithsdale, by charter from Robert the Bruce, in reward for his war-services.

I have mentioned these in some detail, as I would wish to point out that there is strictly historical truth underlying the poem; and although it does not appear quite certain which of the above possessed the castle of Garlies in Bruce's day, yet it must have been one of the Stewarts last mentioned, some of whom, if not all, had issue.

The Castle, which has been a ruin for some centuries, must have been a place of considerable strength, and occupies a site of great natural beauty. Symson, writing in 1684, in reference to the parish of Minnigaff (Monnygaffe, as it was anciently termed) says that "the principal edifice in that district is Garlies, the ancient residence of the Lairds of Garlies, before that family were nobilitated; it doth yet furnish a title to the Earl of Galloway, his eldest son, who is Lord Garlies. This house, being about a mile to the northward of the kirk and town, stands in the midst of a very fine oak wood, pertaining to the said Earl, who also hath another excellent oak wood in this parish, lying upon the water of Cree." ("Large Description," p. 50.)

NOTE B.

*"To seek the pearls that lie beneath,
Hid in the fairy mussel shell,
That Scottish maidens love so well."*

The fresh-water mussel, in which pearls, often of considerable size, are found, is to this day common in many of the rivers in the south of Scotland, and also in the north of Ireland, where I have seen very good pearls taken from the shells of mussels. The rivers Cree, and Dee in Galloway, as well as the Dumfriesshire Nith and the Ayrshire streams, used to be all famous

for these mussels, and I have myself taken no less than five pearls in one afternoon from shells obtained by wading in the Dee near New Galloway : one of these pearls was very white and good, and of the size of a large pea. In olden days they were probably much more numerous, and Scottish pearls were much sought after by ladies of rank, to deck themselves with.

In the more northern rivers, as the Tay and Teith, larger pearls exist, and sometimes are worth as much as £2 each. The scientific designation of the pearl-bearing mussel is *Unio margaritifera*, and many rivers throughout the land in former days had their pearl fisheries, many of which were conducted upon a large scale. It is said, as we learn from old historians, that the original invasion of Britain by the Romans took place in consequence of the tales which had reached that warlike people concerning the excellent quality of the precious pearls to be found in English rivers, and of their wondrous abundance.

NOTE C.

*"And how she on the instant drew
To full extent her bow of yew."*

The bows of the time of Bruce were probably principally formed of the yew tree. In the grasp of the archer, the long yew bow was a most formidable weapon, and the springiness of the wood and the great length of the bow caused a shaft to be propelled to a great distance, and with wonderful power of penetration. To the English bows of yew, we owe some of our proudest victories, as Cressy and Poitiers, and Agincourt. It causes, then, little reason for our surprise when we read in old chronicles that so valued was this tree, that every care was taken, until Elizabeth's reign (when fire-arms were introduced) to preserve the yew, to foster its growth, and to form new plantations of it, and many statutes were passed, during various reigns, for the purpose of pro-

tecting the yew, and of forbidding its exportation. Archery is of great antiquity, its first known introduction into Britain being previous to A.D. 440.

NOTE D.

*"To grim Craignelder's distant crest,
Where human footstep never press'd."*

Craignelder, or Craignilder, is a precipitous and wild mountain to the northward of Cairnsmore of Fleet. Local tradition attaches to the immediate vicinity of this hill, as having been the scene of a fierce conflict between the Gordons of Lochinvar, and Archibald Douglas, Lord of Galloway, who seems to have been a gloomy warrior of a retiring, cruel, and savage nature, and whose stronghold was the Castle of Threave, at that time the most formidable strength in Galloway.

The late Captain Denniston, to whose veracity, however, I fear one is hardly justified in giving an undoubting credence, published in 1832 a little poem, called the "Battle of Craignilder," which purports to tell the story, which it does at some length and in local phraseology, of the fight. It commences as follows; and is said to have been sung by an old woman in the Glenkens district a hundred years ago.

"O heard ye o' that gallant fray,
Was fought on *Nilder's* Scar, man,
Whare Douglass met in fell array,
The fiery Lochinvar, man?
For Galloway's Lord had sworn an aith,
In vengeance for his nephew's death;
That he would spend his dearest breath,
Wi' Sword and Spear in harness graith,*
And a' the means o' working scaith,†
Culled out o' ruin's store, man!
That in the van
He'd lead his Clan
And harry Machermore, man!

* Armour.

† Ill.

Then round he sent the fiery cross,
 It flash'd thro' wild Disdeer, man,
 And flickering through ilk dale and moss,
 It waken'd up Troqueer, man.
 The Maxwells heard the martial tread,
 As round Loch Kinder's waves it sped,—
 Each buckled on his trusty blade,
 And frae the stall the charger led;
 Their Clans, in doughty harness clad,
 Sang out wi' merry glee, man,
 As fast they trode
 The winding road,
 Awa to bonny Dee, man!

Drumlanrich sent twa helted knights,
 And vassals five times ten, man,
 Kilpatrick's twenty plaided wights
 Came rankin * down the glen, man.

* * * *

Then Machermore he started up,
 His cheeks inflamed wi' wrath, man,
 Toss'd in the fire his wassail cup,
 And buckled on his graith, man.
 He roused McKie and warn'd McKill
 To bring their forces from the hill;
 And Garlies famed for weapon skill,
 Brought in his power wi' right good will,
 And Castle Stewart led bye the Gill
 O' glancing spears a score, man,
 And Skeonchan's laird, †
 And brave Glencaird,
 Bore down on Machermore, man!"

Then follows the graphic description of all the brave friends of Lochinvar who gathered round his banner from the Glens, including the lairds of Earlstoun, Glenlee, Stroncastle, Barskeoh, Portmark, Knockgray, Dundee, Knochsting, Castlemaddy, Brochloch, Todston, Lugwyne, and others, including Stewarts, Gordons, Maxwells, and Kennedies. At or near the mountain of Craignilder they encountered the foe, and after a most sanguinary engagement in which some half of the combatants fell on either side, until at

* Hurrying.

† Eschonchan mountain.

length Douglas' men withdrew under cover of night, leaving the Kensmen masters of the field. Then

"The ruddy wine flowed in the cog,
An' tho' they had na mickle prog,
They piled the gleed wi' mony a log,
Till rangers came wi' steer an' hog.
Then soon the feast was spread, man,
The watch gaed roun',
The host lay down,
Each belted in his plaid, man."

The raid of the Douglasses, which seems to have led to this battle, was apparently directed against the family of Machermore. This house, according to Symson ("Description of Galloway") was of considerable standing in Galloway, the first of the family being the youngest son, by name M'Clurg, of the woman known as the "gude wife of Craigencallie," the lands in question forming part of the original grant by King Robert Bruce to her three sons, a fuller account of whom and of their services to the monarch will be found in a subsequent note.

NOTE E.

*"As comes he from Saint Ninian's shrine
That very eve at the hour of nine."*

It is supposed that Saint Ninian was of Saxon origin, and that he hailed originally from Northumberland, and was born in the year 368, and was a direct emanation from the Roman See, whereas the missionaries of Iona, called "Culdees," were independent of the Papal authority, and were spread all over Scotland. According to Symson and other writers this Saint Ninian erected, at the Isle of Whithorn, a chapel, which was called the "chapel of the Isle;" it was surrounded, however, by a burial-ground, from which one would think the chapel was built as a chapel of ease to the monastery of

Candida Casa, only three miles distant, in which case the date of its erection would be considerably later.

St. Ninian is, however, said to have expired 16th September, 432, that day becoming ever afterwards his festival, and his body was interred in his chapel, where many miracles were afterwards wrought by his means. It would seem the saint was his own bishop, and for more than three hundred years after his death, the Picts of Galloway owned no ecclesiastical head whatever. From 723, when Pickthelme, the first bishop, was consecrated, there was a regular succession of bishops till the twelfth century, when King David I. of Scotland instituted the diocese of *Candida Casa*, which included all Wigtownshire and the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright, with the one exception of the lands lying betwixt the Urr and the Nith rivers, which were included in Glasgow diocese.

On August 28th, 1292, Thomas, the then bishop of Galloway or *Candida Casa*, and the Prior, one Morice, swore allegiance to Edward the First of England. Soon afterwards, however, they changed with the times, and were high in the favour of the Bruce, who gave very large grants of lands, salmon-fishery rights, and other concessions to the Priory. The shrine of St. Ninian was famous for the number of pilgrimages that were made to it annually, and many persons of high rank, including kings and queens, visited it.

Amongst these, King Kenneth the Third, who died 994, did so, and the queen Margaret, wife of James the Third, did the same. King James the Fourth made annual pilgrimages, and oftentimes twice a year, to the shrine of St. Ninian, and generally took with him his minstrels, and a costly retinue. At Whithorn he gave, besides his usual offerings, £10 for ten "trentates" (or thirty masses) to be offered up for himself: this was in 1497. "In Feb. 1506, when the queen was delivered of her first son, who died next year, she was not expected to live. The king made a pilgrimage on foot, from Edinburgh to Whithorn, in March following. The king had with him four Italian minstrels, who seem" (by the treasurer's book-accounts) "to have got tired, for horses were engaged to carry them from Whithorn to Tungland." The following

entries in the Royal account book concerning this journey are curious :—" Item (9th March) to the wif of the Murealhouss, quhair the king breakfasted, vj. shillings. Item, that nycht in Dolphingtoun to the priest for fire, candill, and belcheir (good entertainment) quhair the king lay, xvij. s. Item, to a pure man in Dolphingtoun hed a kow slane, xvij. s. Item (13th March) to ane Irisch man that had his silver stollin away, be the king is command, v. s. Item, to three pure folkis at the water of Nyth, ij. s. Item, to twa trumpetis that were at Quhitherne with the king, xxviiiij. s. Item, to long Jok and another cheld to led two hors to Edinburgh, xiiij. s." There are many other quaint entries, and it was during this pilgrimage that the king fell in love with Lady Janet Kennedy, a daughter of John, second Lord Kennedy, father of the first Earl of Cassilis. This lady became his mistress, and usually passed by the name of Lady Bothwell, her son being created, in 1591, Earl of Moray (*vide* "Lands and their Owners in Galloway," vol. i. p. 469). The many thousands of pilgrims who annually visited Saint Ninian's shrine were the means of putting large sums of money into the hands of the priors of Candida Casa, as well as into the coffers of the good people of the town of Whithorn, which then appears to have been in a much more flourishing condition than it is now; indeed, since the Reformation, previously to which it carried on a good trade with the French, the burgh has become merely an agricultural village.

NOTE F.

*" See now impatient Edward race
Across the intervening space."*

The character of Edward Bruce, the brother and gallant helpmate of King Robert, has been handed down to us by Barbour and all contemporary historians as having been most noble in itself, while his valour was glorious, but rash to a degree which often nearly led to serious consequences, while

his impatience was remarkable. As Scott says of him, when the Bruce sees his brother coming towards him :

" See, brave Ronald,—see him dart
O'er stock and stone like hunted hart,
Precipitate, as is the use,
In war or sport, of Edward Bruce."
(*" Lord of the Isles," Canto IV.*)

The gallant Edward Bruce's indomitable bravery was coupled with such recklessness that it led at length to his own death. After he had been proclaimed King of Ireland, he insisted, contrary to the advice of all his friends and officers, in engaging a vastly stronger and altogether superior force of the enemy, on the 5th of October, 1318, at Fagher, near Dundalk. He was slain by one John Maupas, who himself fell dead upon Edward's body, both dying at the same instant. The English would here appear to have forgotten the generous and noble conduct of Robert the Bruce after the battle of Bannockburn, only five years previously ; for, to their disgrace be it recorded, the dead body of the brave Edward was treated with the most revolting indignity, it being cut into quarters, which were publicly exposed to view in four separate districts of Ireland, while his head was carried over to England by the general of the victorious army as an acceptable gift to King Edward II.

NOTE G.

*" Except the plover on the brae,
In black and golden plumage gay."*

This refers to the golden plover (*Charadrius pluvialis*), than which no more lovely bird can be seen in Scotland, when gay in its summer dress. It is a handsome bird in the winter time, with its pretty golden back and head and its white breast ; but when occupied with its eggs or young on the mountains, or by the shores of some quiet lake amongst the hills, its garb of black and white and golden is exceedingly

beautiful, while its sweet, but saddened and plaintive cry, as it flits around an intruder, cannot fail to be associated by the hearer with the wild scenes of lonely grandeur amid which the plover loves to dwell. The green plover, or peewit (*vanellus cristatus*), is a far commoner bird, beautiful too, but very noisy, and better known than its golden relative.

NOTE H.

*"And then the rascals laughed, and told
How Clifford and De Valance bold,
That very night had armed a band
Of valiant men by Minnock's strand."*

De Valance, or as Archdeacon Barbour, writing five hundred years back, calls him, "Aymer de Vallange," was the Earl of Pembroke, then commanding Edward the First's forces in Scotland, of which country the English king had nominated him custodian.

There seems to be some difficulty about his name, Barbour describing him thus, and quaintly chronicles the manner of Comyn's death :

*"And quhen to King Eduuard wes tauld
How at the Brwyss, that wes sa bauld,
Had broucht the Cumyn till ending,
And how he syne had maid him king,
Owt off his wyt he went weill ner ; *
And callit till him Schir Amer
The Wallang, that wes wyss and wycht †
And off his hand a worthy knyght,
And bad him men off armys ta,
And in hy ‡ till Scotland ga,
And byrn, and slay, and raiss dragoun."*

DR. JAMESON'S BARBOUR'S *Bruce*, bk. ii. p. 29.

Then we find *Aymer* de St. John mentioned as having commanded the English, so that the two *Aymers* have been by

* "He very nearly went out of his wits !" † Valiant. ‡ Haste.

some previous writers been supposed to be one and the same individual, but evidently this was not the case. In Pinkerton's edition of "Barbour" (1790) we read (book vi. line 475) :

"The King spak upon this maner,
And off *Walence Schyr Aymer*
Assemblyt a gret cumpany."

And after the battle of Glentroot, in the autumn or late summer of 1307, when Bruce defeated the enemy, we read,

"But *Schyr Amer*, that wis wyss,
Departyt thaim with mekill pain.
And went till Ingland home again !"

And a few lines before this (p. 205, line 560)—

"Tauld how that *Schyr Amery*
With the Clyffurd in cumpany
With the flour off Northummyrland
Was cummand on thaim at thair hand."

NOTE I.

"As thought he of his gentle wife,
At once his love, his Queen, his life."

Robert the Bruce's queen, after the disastrous defeat of the Scots at Methven, had shared in company with other faithful and brave ladies, the greatest privations and hardships in the wild district of Breadalbane ("Barbour," p. 41), where they often had only roots and berries of shrubs to eat, added to what game could be captured or fish obtained in the forests and from the streams. After many very narrow escapes from John of Lorn and his active highlanders, it was at length, to Bruce's great sorrow, decided to send all the women to the strong castle of Kildrummie, in Mar, which was done, under a heavy escort, commanded by the King's youngest brother, Nigel Bruce. The poor Queen, who was a daughter of the Earl of Ulster, with Marjorie Bruce, the King's daughter, and Aymer de Burgh, thinking themselves insecure in Kildrummie Castle, which was soon threatened by the enemy, sought a

shelter in the sanctuary of St. Duthac, at Tain, in the county of Ross. The Queen and her daughter, however, were most treacherously given up by the Earl of Ross to the English, who violated the sanctuary and made prisoners of the ladies and of all the knights who accompanied them. The latter were executed by order of the English King, while Bruce's Queen, who was his second wife, and Princess Marjorie, were closely confined in various English prisons for eight long years.

NOTE J.

*"Then thought he of his brethren twain,
By English Edward foully slain.
Poor Alexander's bleeding head,
And Thomas Bruce's, dripping red,
Appear before his gaze ;
And gallant Crawford's bloody fate,
And fierce McDowall's deadly hate,
Combine his wrath to raise."*

In the very outset of the Bruce's career of the glorious struggle for his country's independence, sorrows innumerable, disappointments without an end, defeats in battle, loss of his most valued friends by death, and the barbarous executions of many of his nearest and dearest blood-relations, would have thrown a less gallant spirit into the depth of despair. Not so, however, with Robert Bruce, whose terrible trials only seemed to prompt his manly heart to fresh endeavours and to new attempts to wrest his country from the Usurper. One of the most grievous blows that befell the patriot king early in the year 1307, was this :

"He had despatched his two brothers, Thomas and Alexander, into Ireland, where they had the good fortune to collect a force of seven hundred men, with which they crossed over to Loch Ryan in Galloway. But their approach to the coast had been watched by Macdowall, a chieftain of that country, who was in the English interest, and as they attempted

to make good a landing, he attacked, and completely routed their little army. Many perished in the sea, and the rest were either slain or taken prisoners. Of the prisoners, those of note were Bruce's brothers, Thomas and Alexander, with Sir Reginald Crawford, who were *all* grievously wounded. Malcolm Mackail, lord of Kentire, along with two Irish *reguli* or chiefs, were found amongst the slain. Macdowall, with savage exultation, cut off their heads, and presented them, and his illustrious prisoners, bleeding and almost dead, to the King at Carlisle." ("Math. Westminster," pp. 457, 458, and "Heningford," p. 225.) Edward commanded the two Bruces and Crawford to be instantly executed. Thus within a few short months had the King to lament the cruel death of three brothers (see note L. to following canto), that of his dear friends Seton, Athole and Frazer (see note M, stanza xxvii.), besides the imprisonment of his queen and his daughter. Langtoft, the historian, asserts in his account of the capture of the Bruce's two brethren, that MacDowall surprised and took them when returning from a church with their soldiers upon Ash Wednesday, 1307 ("Langtoft," vol. ii, page 337), but this is not at all probable. The MacDowalls were in olden times the most powerful clan in Galloway, one of their number, Roland Macdowall, being in the year 1190 called "Princeps Gallovidiæ" (Dugdale's "Monasticon," vol. ii. p. 1057). The modern representative is William MacDowall of Logan.

NOTE K.

*"Then 'fore his eyes a vision rose,
Where bars of wood a cage enclose,
Secured with iron bolt and band,
And locked by servile English hand,
Where sorrowed Buchan's lovely dame."*

Shortly after the taking of Kildrummy Castle by the Earl of Hereford, and the capture of Bruce's Queen, and the Princess

Marjory, Isabella, Countess of Buchan, was also taken by the English. King Edward had a terrible and vindictive spite against this brave dame, whose beauty was the talk of Scotland, but who had dared to beard the English monarch by actually placing the golden crown upon the brow of King Robert the Bruce as he sat upon his oaken throne at Scone, the original famous stone chair on which all previous monarchs had been crowned having been taken away to Westminster Abbey (where it still remains) by Edward of England, who also carried off the regalia of Scotland. Robert Bruce was solemnly crowned on Friday, March the 27th, 1305, with a slight coronet of gold. (Rymer, "Foedera," vol. ii. p. 1048.) This *coronella aurea* appears to have come into the hands of Geoffrey de Coigners, who concealed and preserved it, which gave great offence to Edward. (Langtoft's "Chronicle," vol. ii. p. 331.) It was, by all accounts, not expressly made for Robert's coronation. A banner, wrought with the arms of Baliol, was delivered to the new King by the Bishop of Glasgow, Wishart by name, and under its folds he received the allegiance of all the barons, knights, and other leaders who were faithful to his cause.

Two days, however, after the coronation, and before Bruce left Scone, "they were surprised by the sudden arrival of Isabella, Countess of Buchan, sister of the Earl of Fife, who immediately claimed the privilege of placing the King upon the throne. It was a right which had undoubtedly belonged to the Earls of Fife from the days of Malcolm Canmore; and as the Earl of Fife was at this time of the English party, the Countess, a high-spirited woman, leaving her home, joined Bruce at Scone, bringing with her the war-horses of her husband. The new King was not in a condition to think lightly of anything of this nature. To have refused Isabella's request, might give to his enemies some colour for alleging that an essential part of the ancient solemnity had been omitted at his coronation. The *English* historians would have us believe that the lady was influenced by tenderer feelings than ambition or policy: but this is doubtful. It is certain that the King was a second time installed in the

regal chair by the hands of the Countess." ("Tytler," vol. i. p. 202.)

The relentless and vindictive Edward was delighted at the news of the capture of the Lady Buchan, and he at once gave orders for the construction of a large "cage," latticed with wood and cross-barred, and strongly secured with iron, in one of the highest turrets of the Castle at Berwick.

Grose, in his "History of the English Army" (pp. 116, 117), describes this cruel act of Edward's thus:—"For the confinement of the Countess of Baghun, or Buchan, a Scotch prisoner, the chamberlain of Scotland, or his lieutenant, were by a writ of privy-seal, 34 Edward I., A.D. 1306, directed to fit up one of the turrets of the Castle of Berwick-upon-Tweed, and therein to build a strong cage of lattice work, constructed with stout posts and barres, and well strengthened with iron; this cage to be so contrived, that the countess might have the convenience of a privy, proper care being taken that it did not lessen the security of her person. In this cage the countess was to be kept, without being suffered to go out on any account whatever, and also to be prevented speaking with any person, Scotch or English, except the keeper of the castle, and a woman or two of the town of Berwick, appointed by him to deliver her food, the keeper to be answerable for the safe keeping of her body. The sister of Robert Bruce was prisoner at the same time, and treated in the same mannerr. (She was confined in a cage built for her in a turret of Roxburgh Castle.)

"In the directions given by Edward I., A.D. 1306, respecting the confinement of the wife of Robert Bruce, among the servants allowed is the following:—"And also let her have a foot-boy to remain in her chamber; one that shall be sober, and not a riotous one, to make her bed, and to do other things required for her chamber."

Some of the contemporary historians state that, in order to remind Lady Buchan of the cause of her confinement, Edward ordered the cage to be made in the shape of a crown, with gilded points. In this cage the fair prisoner was confined for more than eight years.

NOTE L.

*"The sorrowing monarch d'en can trace
The outline dim of Nigel's face,
As, sadly bent his haughty head,
A prisoner from Kildrummie led."*

These and the following lines of the stanza refer to Nigel Bruce, the King's brother, and his gallant defence of the castle of Kildrummie, which he and his brave fellow-patriots defended against a powerful English army under the Earls of Hereford and Lancaster for a long time. So glorious were the feats of valour of the defenders of the place, so highly did they trust Nigel, and so downcast by their constant defeats in various sallies of the garrison were the enemy, that it is more than probable the English army would have withdrawn. This however, they did not do, on account of the treachery of one of the garrison (said to have been a woman), who, bribed by a large sum by the enemy, set fire to the magazine containing all the corn and other supplies, which compelled the Scotch to surrender. A vast number of the enemy were slain during the long siege, which will ever reflect honour on the name of the unfortunate Nigel Bruce. He appears to have been a very beautiful young man, and is described as "*miles pulcherrimæ juventutis*" ("*Math. Westminster*," p. 456) and his fate excited universal pity in England, excepting in the heart of Edward, who had him conveyed to Berwick, tried and condemned by a special "mock" commission, hanged (it is said within *sight* of the Countess of Buchan's cage) and afterwards beheaded. Other gallant soldiers and knights at the same time suffered a similar fate ("*Scala Chronica*," p. 131). Barbour, speaking of Nigel's bravery says:—

"How Neill the Bruce held Kildromy,
He gadryt gret chewalry."

("The Bruce," bk. iii. v. 413.)

NOTE M.

*" There Simon Fraser waves his brand,
 And Somerville hath sword in hand,
 And brave De Boys hath taken stand
 By Athole stout and bold.
 His mighty weapon Logan bore,
 De Morham looks his armour o'er,
 Inchmartin stands beside the shore
 With Wallace, as of old ! "*

When the castle of Kildrummie fell, and the prisoners captured there were brought to Carlisle, King Edward I. was almost in a dying state, and the folk about the monarch told him that the prisoners were there, and asked what was to be done with them. The King, in a violent rage, but grinning savagely, said, " Hang and draw ! " Such was his vindictiveness, although he knew he himself would not live long.

Barbour thus describes this incident :—

*" And quhen he to the dede wes ner,
 The folk, that at Kyldromy wer,
 Come with prisoneris that thai had tane,
 And syne to the king ar gane.
 And for to confort him thai tauld
 How thai to them the castell yauld,
 And how they to his will war broucht,
 To do off that quhat euir he thocht ;
 And askyt quhat men suld off thaim do.
 Then lukyt he angrily thaim to,
 And said grynnaund, " Hyngis and drawys ! "*

And then those that stood around the King marvelled much

*" That he, that to the dede was ner,
 Suld answer apon sic maner."*

The ghastly royal commands, however, were duly carried out. The Earl of Athole, though allied to the King of England, had fought with Bruce at Methven and was present

at his coronation at Scone, and escaped on board ship, but was driven back by a tempest and fell into Edward's hands, whereat the latter expressed great exultation. Many English nobles interceded for Athole, on account of the royal blood in his veins, but Edward swore that the only difference in his execution should be that his gallows should be loftier than those of his fellow traitors! No empty threat was Edward's: for Athole, on being conveyed to London, was tried at Westminster Hall, condemned, as a matter of course, and hanged upon a gallows of fifty feet in height. Having been then barbarously cut down when but half dead, his bowels were taken out by his executioners and burnt before his very face. The patriot was next beheaded, and the head placed upon London Bridge, beside those of other knights and patriots. ("Math. Westminster," p. 456, Tytler's "Hist. Scot.")

Sir Simon Frazer, who was remarkably popular in Scotland, being one of the last surviving followers of the great Wallace, was free for a long time, but at length was routed near Stirling and taken to London very heavily ironed, his legs tied beneath his horse's belly, and as he passed through the city, the crowds loudly derided him and placed a garland of periwinkle, in mockery upon his head. He was then incarcerated in the Tower, and with him were Thomas de Boys, and Sir Herbert de Morham, a Scottish knight of French extraction. Poor Frazer, having been condemned, was executed with more than usual barbarity, owing to the part he had played in Wallace's fight for freedom. He was hung, cut down while living, his entrails torn out and burned; his head cut off, and placed on a pole beside his great chief and comrade, Wallace, on London Bridge. It was considered necessary to hang the trunk in iron chains, lest his friends might remove it.

Sir Herbert de Morham (not de Norham, as Lord Hailes erroneously calls him), who had been imprisoned and forfeited in 1297, but liberated under promise to serve in Edward's Flemish war, was the next victim, and with him Thomas de Boys. "To these victims of Edward's resentment we may add the names of Sir David Inchmartin, Sir John de

Somerville, Sir Walter Logan, and many others of inferior note. After the disgusting details of these executions, the reader will be disposed to smile at the remark of a late acute historian, that the execution of the Scottish prisoners is *insufficient* to load Edward's memory with the charge of cruelty!" (Tytler, "History of Scotland," vol. i. p. 217.) The fate of Wallace himself, that glorious pioneer of his country's struggle for freedom, was very tragic, being most treacherously betrayed to the English by Sir John Menteith, a name for ever disgraced among succeeding generations of his countrymen. Wallace, "suspecting no evil, was fraudulently and treacherously seized at Glasgow by Lord John de Menteith." (Bower, "Scotichron," xii. 8.) Great was Edward's joy when he learned of the success of the base and treacherous Menteith. The gallant patriot was seized while in his bed, by Menteith, who is stated to have obtained all the information he required from a servant who waited on Wallace. Having been carried to London, he was treated with the most refined cruelty by Edward, and, indeed, were not the facts narrated by the English as well as by the Scotch historians, we could scarcely credit such barbarity. He was brought with much pomp to Westminster Hall, and there arraigned of treason. A crown of laurel, in mockery placed, was on his head, because Wallace had been heard to boast that, he deserved to wear a crown in that hall! Sir Peter Mallorie, the king's justice, then impeached him as a traitor to the king of England (Stow, "Chron." p. 209,) as having burned the villages and abbeys, stormed the castles, and slain and tortured the liege subjects of his master the king. Wallace indignantly and truly repelled the charge of treason, as he never had sworn fealty to Edward; but to the other articles of accusation he pleaded no defence. They were notorious, and he was condemned to death. The sentence was carried out on August 23rd, 1305. Discrowned and chained, he was now dragged at the tails of horses through the streets, to the foot of a high gallows, placed at the elms in Smithfield. (Winton, vol. ii. notes, p. 502.) This spot is now occupied by Cow Lane. After being hanged, but not to death, he was cut down yet

breathing, his bowels taken out and burnt before his face. ("Math. Westminster," p. 451.) His head was then struck off, and his body divided into four quarters. The head was placed on a pole on London Bridge, his right arm above the bridge at Newcastle, his left arm was sent to Berwick, his right foot and limb to Perth, and his left quarter to Aberdeen. (MS. "Chronicle of Lanercost," p. 203.) "'These,' says an old English historian, 'were the trophies of their favorite hero, which the Scots had now to contemplate, instead of his banners and gonfanons, which they had once proudly followed.' But he might have added, that they were trophies more glorious than the richest banner that had ever been borne before him, and if Wallace already had been the idol of the people, it may well be conceived—now that the mutilated limbs of this martyr to liberty were brought amongst them—how deep and inextinguishable were their feelings of pity and revenge." ("Tytler," vol. i. pp. 186, 187.)

In the Harleian Manuscripts (No. 2,253, fol. 59, Vo. Reign of Edward II.) appears a most curious "song" upon the execution of Sir Simon Frazer. It has been lately (1884) republished under the care of Mr. Edmund Goldsmid, F.R.H.S., and forms one of the "political songs of England" in his series of "Bibliotheca Curiosa." It is evidently written by an English partisan. One of the "verses" sets forth that :—

"Sir Edward of Caernarvon (Jesus save him and have him in regard !)
And Aymer de Valence, a gentle knight and liberal,
They have sworn their oath that, by the grace of God !
They will deliver us from that false country,

If they can
Much hath Scotland lost,
What latterly, and what before,
And little praise won !

It was before St. Bartholomew's mass—that Frazer was taken !"

* * * * *

"Soon afterwards the tidings came to the king ;
They sent him to London with many an armed man ;
He came in at Newgate, I tell it you faithfully,
A garland of leaves placed
On his head of green,

Because he should be known
 Both by high and by low
 As a traitor, I ween !
 Fettered were his legs, under his horse's belly,
 Both with iron and steel manacled were his hands ;

* * * * *
 " When he came to the gallows, first he was hanged,
 Beheaded all alive, though it seemed to him long,
 Afterwards he was opened, his bowels burnt,
 The head to London bridge was sent

For disgrace !
 As I may ever thrive !
 At one time he thought
 Little there to stand !"

* * * * *
 " And the body hangs fast on the gallows,
 With iron clasps long to last,
 To guard well the body, and the Scotch to drive away,
 Four-and-twenty there are for sooth at least
 By night,
 If anyone were so hardy
 The body to remove
 Immediately to attack them !"

These are quaint "verses," but characteristic of the times ;
 and all point to the truth of the accounts of the contemporary
 historians of these bloody executions.

NOTE N.

*" While o'er the rocky fell resounds
 The baying of the savage hounds
 Whose ardour scarce may iron chain,
 Held by their masters' hand, restrain."*

These dogs were, as a rule, bloodhounds, generally of a grey or brindled colour, and were originally of Southern European breed, probably from Spain, or at all events partaking somewhat of the appearance and fierceness of the Pyrenean wolf-hound of our own times. It was the custom of those who held them, whilst they pressed upon the scent of a fugitive, for their masters to hold them in a leash, their

speed being as a rule comparatively slow, so that men on foot could keep up with them.

NOTE O.

*"Yon villains would betray their king,
And train a hound to hunt to death
Their monarch on his native heath."*

On several occasions Robert Bruce was actually hunted with bloodhounds, and, as Walter Scott says (notes to "Lord of the Isles"), "The echoes of Scotland did actually

"—— ring

With the bloodhounds that bayed for her fugitive king."

A very curious and romantic tale is told by Barbour, which may be abridged as follows :—

When Bruce had again got footing in Scotland in the spring of 1306, he continued to be in a very weak and precarious condition, obliged to fly before his enemies whenever they assembled in force. Upon one occasion, while he was lying with a small party in the wilds of Cumnoch, in Ayrshire, Aymer de Valence, Earl of Pembroke, with John of Lorn and eight hundred highlanders, besides a large body of men at arms, came suddenly upon him. They brought a bloodhound, or "slough-dog," with them, said to have once been a great favourite with Bruce himself. Bruce, having less than half the number of men, divided his force into three parts, and retreated by three separate routes. When John of Lorn arrived at the spot, he caused the hound to be put upon the trace, which immediately directed him to the pursuit of the party which Bruce headed. The King again subdivided his small body, with a like result, Lorn attaching himself exclusively to that party followed by the hound, and which he knew was commanded by Bruce. Lorn now sent five of his most active attendants to intercept the King, who, on seeing his enemies come up with him, said to his single attendant, "What aid wilt thou make?"—"The best I can," replied his

foster-brother. "Then here," said Bruce, "I take my stand!" The King took three to himself, leaving the other two to his foster-brother. He slew the first who encountered him, but observing his foster-brother hard pressed, he sprang to his assistance, and despatched one of his assailants. Leaving him to deal with the survivor, he returned upon the other two, both of whom he slew before his foster-brother had despatched his single antagonist! In the meanwhile Lorn's party approached rapidly, and the King and his foster-brother betook themselves to a neighbouring wood. There they sat down, for Bruce was exhausted by fatigue, until the cry of the slough-hound came so near, that his foster-brother entreated Bruce to provide for his safety by retreating farther. "I have heard," answered the King, "that whosoever will wade a bow-shot length down a running stream, shall make the slough-hound lose scent. Let us try the experiment, for were yon devilish hound silenced, I should care little for the rest."

Lorn in the meanwhile advanced and found the bodies of his slain vassals, over whom he made his moan, and threatened the most deadly vengeance. Then he followed the hound to the side of the brook, down which the King had waded a great way. Here the hound was at fault, and John of Lorn, after long attempting in vain to recover Bruce's trace, relinquished the pursuit. (Scott.) The English historians also agree with Barbour as to the pursuing of Bruce with hounds.

NOTE P.

*"And shout they now, 'He may not last!'
As yet once more those warriors fast
Come spurring on the brae to gain."*

Many of the people of Galloway were unfriendly to Bruce, and did all that lay in their power to capture him, and deliver him over to Edward, and that district was one of the very last

in Scotland to acknowledge Bruce as sovereign—that is, as an *entire* province, for there had always been a large body of Gallovidians in arms with the King. On one occasion, not very long after the defeat of Bruce at the battle of Dalry, the fugitive king was in the wilds of Galloway (probably near Loch Dee, or the neighbouring mountains of Ayrshire), with only about sixty followers.

I cannot do better than transcribe the account (taken mainly from Archdeacon Barbour's "Bruce") in Scott's "Tales of a Grandfather." "These Galloway men," says he, "resolved to attack him by surprise, and for this purpose they got two hundred men together, and brought with them two or three bloodhounds." The good King Robert Bruce had received some information of the intention of this party to come upon him suddenly and by night. Accordingly he quartered his little troop of sixty men on the side of a deep and swift-running river, that had very steep and rocky banks. There was but one ford by which this river could be crossed in that neighbourhood, and that ford was deep and narrow, so that two men could scarcely get through abreast. The ground on which they were to land on the side where the King was, was steep, and the path which led upwards from the water's edge to the top of the bank, extremely narrow and difficult.

Bruce caused his men to lie down to take some sleep, at a place about half a mile distant from the river, while he himself with two attendants* went down to watch the ford, through which the enemy must needs pass before they could come to the place where King Robert's men were lying. He stood for some time looking at the ford, and thinking how easily the enemy might be kept from passing there, providing it was bravely defended, when he heard at a distance the baying of a hound, which was always coming nearer and nearer. This was the bloodhound which was tracing the King's steps to the ford where he had crossed, and the two hundred Galloway men were along with the animal, and guided by it. Bruce at first thought of going back to awaken

* "Barbour" says *one* attendant, and that was Sir Gilbert de la Haye; also "Tyler," vol. i. p. 223.

his men ; but then he reflected that it might be only some shepherd's dog. "My men," he said, "are sorely tired ; I will not disturb their sleep for the yelping of a cur, till I know something more of the matter. So he stood and listened, and bye and bye, as the cry of the hound came nearer, he began to hear a trampling of horses, and the voices of men, and the ringing and clattering of armour, and then he was sure that the enemy were coming to the river side. Then the King thought, 'If I go back to give my men the alarm, these Galloway men will get through the ford without opposition ; and that would be a pity since the place is so advantageous to make a defence against them.' So he looked again on the steep path, and the deep river, and he thought that they gave him so much advantage, that he himself could defend the passage with his own hand until his men came to assist him. His armour was so good and strong that he had no fear of arrows, and therefore the combat was not so very unequal as it would otherwise have been." (Scott.) "He instantly despatched De la Haye to rouse and bring up his little force, whilst he remained alone to defend the pass." (Tytler.)

"In the meanwhile the noise and trampling of the horses increased ; and the moon being bright, Bruce beheld the glancing arms of about two hundred men, who came down to the opposite bank of the river. The men of Galloway, on their part, saw but one solitary figure guarding the ford, and the foremost of them plunged into the river without minding him. But as they could only pass the ford one by one, the Bruce, who stood high above them on the bank where they were to land, killed the foremost man with a thrust of his long spear, and with a second thrust stabbed the horse, which fell down, kicking and plunging in its agonies, on the narrow path, and so prevented the others who were following from getting out of the river. Bruce had thus an opportunity of dealing his blows at pleasure among them, while they could not strike at him again." (Scott.) The horse, borne down to the earth, and instantly stabbed, blocked up the path in such a way, that the next soldier must charge over his body. He, too, with many of his companions, successively, but

vainly, endeavoured to carry the pass. They were met by the dreadful sword of the King, which swept round on every side. Numbers now fell, and formed a ghastly barrier around him; so that on the approach of his men, the Galwegians drew off, and gave up the pursuit. When the soldiers came up they found Bruce wearied, but unwounded, and sitting on a bank, where he had cast off his helmet to wipe his brow, and cool himself in the night air. ("Tytler," vol. i. p. 224.)

Archdeacon Barbour ("Bruce," Book iv.) relates, in great detail, this occurrence, and having described the fight (as above), comes to the point where the King has slain several of the Gallovidians, when they are evidently ashamed to be held at bay by one man.

"Then said one; 'Certes, we ar to blame.
 Quhat sall we say quhen we cum hame,
 Quhen a man fechtis agane us all?
 Quha wyst our men sa foully fall
 As us, if that we thus gat leve?'
 With that all haile a schout thai geve;
 And cryit, 'On him! he may nocht last.'
 With that thai pressyt hym sa fast."

And when the King's men approach to his aid, Barbour observes:—

"The Gallowaymen hard thar cummyng;
 And fled, and durst abid no mar."

And Robert the Bruce tells his followers how God had helped his hand to defeat his foes, and his men looked to see how many of them

"—war ded;
 And thai found lying, in that sted,
Fourtene, that war slayne with his hand."

Other accounts also agree that fourteen was the exact number of the enemy, besides horses, whom the King slew on this memorable night. There is, unluckily, no precise record of the river on whose banks the encounter actually took place, but, as I previously observed, it was doubtless somewhere in the old forest of Buchan, and I have in my

mind's eye, a certain spot (where I have often hunted a pack of otter hounds that I once kept in Galloway) in a river which would well coincide with Barbour's description of the locality.

NOTE Q.

*"And still that massive sword and shield,
Which none but he can hold or wield,
Do glorious work, and win the field."*

The mighty strength of King Robert was spoken of by all the historians of his time. Few could carry his sword, of such great weight and length was it, and none but the King himself could use it with any ease. All accounts agree that no man in the country was a match for him in strength and in the use of the sword, excepting Sir William Wallace. The battle axe was also a favourite weapon of Bruce's, he having carried one at Bannockburn, which broke in his hand when he slew Henry de Bohun, a gallant English knight, in single combat. Bruce's two-handed sword and his helmet were for long ages preserved at Clackmannan Castle, and passed into possession of the Earl of Elgin and Kincardine, they having been bequeathed to him, together with the family-tree, by the widow of John de Bruce, a younger son of Robert, the fifth lord of Annandale, and uncle to King Robert the Bruce.

NOTES TO INTRODUCTION TO CANTO III.

NOTE A.

*" Or by the windings of the Cree?
Or where old Criffel guards the sea,
That rolls her tide on Solway's strand,
Then backward hastes to Cumberland?"*

The river Cree, which flows through some of the most lovely scenery in Scotland, flows into Wigtown Bay a short distance from the modern town of Newton-Stewart (originally Newtown-Douglas). This beautiful stream possesses many windings, which are described in old works by the name of "The cruives of Cree." This we notice in the ancient verse, alluding to the great power of the family of Kennedy in the south-west of Scotland, when the Cassilis clan were all dominant.

*" Twixt Wigtown an' the toon o' Ayr,
Portpatrick an' the Cruives o' Cree;
No man need hope for to bide there,
Unless he court wi' Kennedie."*

Criffel is a fine and picturesque mountain, on the Kirkcudbrightshire side of the river Nith, and commanding a splendid view of the Solway and the English mountains.

NOTE B.

*" Or, where, 'neath woods of dark'ning fir,
By grey Dalbeattie flows the Urr."*

Dalbeattie is a modern town, and standing on the pretty river of Urr, has a picturesque appearance. It is famous for

the excellence of its granite, which is hewn principally from Craignair quarries, and which is of a fine texture and grey in colour. Various large public buildings in England have been constructed of this stone, including the Thames Embankment, and it is even sent abroad, a fine lighthouse on the island of Ceylon being built of it.

There is an interesting, and doubtless a true, legend connected with Bruce and the banks of the river Urr, which may not be out of place here.—One morning early, when the King was wandering, as was his habit, with only one or two attendants, about the year 1306, he was suddenly attacked near the Urr by a small party of the English under one Sir Walter Selby. The combat was fierce and still undecided, and the warriors had been reduced to only three on each side, when the noise reached the ears of one Dame Sprotte, the spouse of Mark Sprotte, who was getting the good man's breakfast ready in her cottage hard by. She came upon the scene, and saw several men lying wounded, and two knights, with vizors closed, contending in mortal strife. One of these at length had no alternative but to yield himself to the other; and both having washed their blood-stained hands in the Urr, accompanied the woman to her house. "Bring some food," said the Scottish knight; "I have tasted no food for nearly two days, else Sir Walter Selby, renowned in arms as he is, had not resisted Robert Bruce so long." The good dame now placed a small oaken table before the King, and filled a large wooden bowl (said to be still preserved by her descendants) with the favourite breakfast at the time of Scotsmen, and put one spoon beside it. "Bring another spoon," said the King, "and let this gentle knight partake with me." She answered, "I should be no true subject if I feasted our mortal foe: I have vowed that a Southron shall never eat within my door in my presence." "To reward thy loyalty," said the Bruce, "I make thee lady of as much land around thy cottage as thou canst encompass by running, whilst I take my breakfast." As the King lifted the first spoon to his mouth, she flew to the door, and Robert and his late antagonist laid aside their helmets and took alternate spoonfuls of the hot but

homely fare. After running around the hill—now called the King's Mount—and encompassing the holm, the King and Selby heard her thus communing with herself, as she entered the house: "I shall be called the lady of the Mount, and my husband shall be called the lord o'nt. We shall, nae doubt, be called the Sprottes o' the Mount o' Urr, while Dalbeattie wood grows, an' while Urr runs! Our sons an' daughters will be given in marriage to the mighty ones o' the land, an' to wed one o' the Sprottes of Urr may be the toast of barons! We shall grow honoured and great, an' the tenure by which our heritage will be held shall be the presenting o' butter-brose in a lordly dish to the kings o' Scotland, when they chance to pass the Urr!"

"On thine own tenure," said King Robert, "so loyally and characteristically spoken, my heroic dame of Galloway, shall the Sprottes of Urr hold their heritage! This mount shall be called the King's Mount, and when the kings of Scotland pass the Urr, they shall partake of brose from King Robert Bruce's bowl, and from no other, presented by the fair and loyal hands of a Sprotte! Be wise, be valiant, be loyal and faithful, and possess this land free of paying plack or penny till the name of Bruce perish in tale, in song, and in history; and so I render it to thee."

And for over five hundred years did the good dame's offspring possess the land.

NOTE C.

*"Where sweetly by the Penkill burn
Cumladen hides her forest bower."*

Cumloden is a very pretty and romantically situated cottage residence of the Earls of Galloway, built close to the stream of the Penkill burn. It is not very far from the ruins of Garlies Castle, the original "tower of strength" of the Stewarts in Bruce's time. Glorious scenery exists on every

side ; and associations of olden days, and memories of ancient deeds of valour meet one at every step for miles around. Penkill was anciently spelt Polkil.

NOTE D.

*" Or Castle Stewart's ivied side,
Sad relic of its former pride."*

This was once the residence of the Stewarts of Castle-Stewart : its walls are ivy-grown, and picturesque ; but still it can be seen of what vast thickness and strength the tower must once have been. It appears that Viscount Kenmure, in May, 1646, had the principal "sasine" of the lands and barony, and the next owner was Colonel William Stewart, descended from the Stewarts of Garlies, and a valiant soldier who fought under King Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden, in the German wars. No doubt this person built the castle, which now belongs to Mr. Stopford Blair, of Penninghame. Whether or not the family of Lord Castle-Stewart had anything to do with this castle does not appear to have been satisfactorily determined.

There is one legend connected with Castle-Stewart, which I think is worthy of record, and I shall repeat it in honest old Andrew Symson's own words ("Description of Galloway," p. 59) :—"Of this Collonell Stewart's lady, grandmother to the present (1660) Lady Castle-Stewart, I have heard a strange passage, which I think fit to insert, viz., that the said lady, before her husband went to the wars, one day combing her hair in the sun, her sight wholly departed from her ; after which her husband betook himself to the wars in Germany, and was there advanced to be a Collonell, his lady in the meantime remaining at home blind ; at length she resolves, blind as she was, to visit her husband, and taking a servant with her, took shipping for Holland, from whence, after a tedious journey, she came to Germany, and enquiring

after the army, and among them the Scots regiments, met there with her husband, who owned and received her. The lady being there, and, some say seven years after her blindness, combing her hair, some report in the sun also, yea, and the same day of the month that it departed from her, her sight was restored as perfectly as at the first ! And since I've related a passage of the wife, I'll add a passage of the husband, of the which a very judicious person assures me he was an eye-witness, viz., the said Collonell Stewart, being at home here in Galloway, was affected with a palsie for the space of about a year and a halfe, which affected the one side from head to foot, occasioned, perhaps, through loss of blood in the wars ; and yet he fell into a most violent fever, which affected the other side only. He recovered of the fever in a month's time or thereby, and lived near two years after that, but the palsie continued till his dying day."

NOTES TO CANTO III.

NOTE A.

*" Where grouse from grim Muldonnoch take
Their rapid flight across the lake,
And 'mid the purple heather rest
That grows upon Eschoncan's breast."*

The famous loch of Trool is situated in a deep glen, on either side of which rise lofty mountains, some grey with large boulders of granite rocks, others green with bracken and fringed below with birches and alders, and some purple with heather. The hill of Muldonnoch rises above the lake to the height of 1,827 feet on one side of the water ; while on

the opposite bank is the fell of Eschoncan, or Esconchan, or as it used anciently to be spelt by Blaeu, in his Atlas, by the terribly jaw-breaking name of Eshsheskewackan ! This hill is 1,142 feet high.

NOTE B.

" The bittern guards the waters' edge."

The bittern, which was very common throughout both England, Ireland, and Scotland a hundred years ago, was, no doubt, very common in the time of Bruce in Galloway, where its deep hollow-sounding "boom" often must have resounded from the wide-stretching marshes by those solitary lakes and streams. It is now hardly ever found in Great Britain, being quite a *rara avis*, although common in Holland and other parts of the Continent.

NOTE C.

*" Or was it distant bleat
Of shaggy goat on Craigenbae,
Calling its young to point the way."*

Wild goats were numerous in those days throughout Scotland, and even to the present time there are some goats in a state of wildness in the mountains around Loch Dee, and Trool, and especially on the farm of Craigencallie, amongst whose precipices I have occasionally observed the wild goats with their shaggy beards and long horns. They are very hard to approach, but can sometimes be killed with the rifle. Many of these so-called "wild goats" were originally tame, but have become shy by reason of their wild habits, and the ease with which they find their sustenance, even in heavy snow.

NOTE D.

*"Or perhaps that sound he heard on high
Was but the gyre-carling's cry."*

The gyre-carling, or carlin, was the old name for the gyre falcon, once fairly numerous in Scotland, and still common in Norway. Its cry was supposed to be like that said to be made by witches; hence the name of the Carlins' cairn, applied to one of the lofty mountains composing the range of the Kells, in the forest of Buchan, and to which a witch-wife, or carlin, was supposed to resort.

According to Dr. Leyden, the gyre-carling is the name used by the Scottish peasantry for Hecate, or the "Mother-witch," sometimes also identified with the "queen of the fairies," or the "great hag." (Lang's "Ancient Pop. Poetry.")

NOTE E.

*"Mayhap the lordly elk is dashing
The forest through, and grimly crashing
His angry way through briar and brake."*

This grand deer is also extinct in Scotland, as it is in Ireland, where it was once so common. Large horns and skulls of immense size have often been dug up both in the bogs of Scotland and Ireland, but more often in the latter country, especially in counties Kilkenny, Waterford, and Limerick, from the latter of which I possess some very fine horns and skulls, which must have reached to a span of from five to six feet from tip to tip of the horns, when the creature was alive. And many of a far greater size have been found.

NOTE F.

"The witch-wife of Loch Ochiltree."

The belief in witches, dwarfs who could do deadly harm, wizards, and fairies, was universal in Scotland up to a very

late period, and doubtless in the time of Bruce was very prevalent. This is, of course, an imaginary individual, but Barbour tells us that an old woman, dressed as a beggar, was actually sent by the Earl of Pembroke up the Glen of Trool, to find out from Bruce the number of his men, and, under pretence of asking charity, to get all information possible, and return to tell the news to the English.

"The woman has he sene alswyth,
He saw her uncouth and for thy,
He beheld her mar encrely;
And by her countenance hym thoct
That for gud cummyn was sche nocht.
Then gert he men in by her ta,
And sche, that dred men suld her sta,
Tauld how that Schye Amery,
With the Clyffurd in cumpany,
With the flour of Northumberland
Waar cummand on thaim at thair hand.

BARBOUR'S *Bruce*.

NOTE G.

*"Three hundred mighty granite blocks
Are loosen'd from their parent rocks,
With stalwart arms and iron bars
They toil beneath the twinkling stars."*

The encounter at Glentrool has, to my mind, ever formed one of the wildest and most romantic, as well as exciting, of all the deeds of Bruce. It seems, however, to have been to some extent overlooked by the historians, and although all of them do allude to it, they pass it over by merely stating that some 1,500 men of the southern forces, under the Earl of Pembroke, Lord Clifford, and Vane, were completely defeated by the Bruce's men, who numbered but 300, or rather less. Any visitor to the Glen of Trool, however, on surveying the ground, would not fail to see with what comparative ease this gallant deed could have been done. Though some, I am fully aware, have seen proper to doubt that this was the manner in which the Scotch defeated Pembroke, I think one is fully

justified in taking the romantic view of the way in which the fight was probably waged ; and this I have done. Besides, it is the tradition of the district itself. Tradition, then, informs us that the Bruce retreated in the month of June or July, 1307, into the mountain fastnesses, at the head of Loch Trool, a wild and lovely lake in the parish of Minnigaff. Bruce, like a wary and experienced general, saw at a single glance the great advantages he might reap from his present position, and determined to avail himself of them to the uttermost. The path that wound up the margin of the lake was so narrow, that two men could not walk, much less ride, abreast, while a steep hill—in several places precipitous—arose from the very margin of the water, and skirted it for nearly a mile. About the centre of this path the hill pushes forth a precipitous abutment, called still by the inhabitants of this sequestered glen the “Steps of Trool.” The pathway here is about twenty feet perpendicular above the surface of the water, while the hill above is almost the same for a few hundred yards, and very steep for a quarter of a mile higher. It was *this spot* that Bruce fixed on for the scene of his operations. His slender body of troops consisted of a few hardy, tried veterans, who had stood by him in many a well-contested field,—who had braved every vicissitude of season, and suffered every privation with their undaunted leader. The rest were a body of half-armed and undisciplined peasantry, who had been induced to join him in his hasty marches through the country ; and whilst they added to his numerical force, were often a drawback on his slender resources, and even impeded the rapidity of the forced marches, which his frequent defeats rendered necessary. Fully aware that the English would follow, he sent his peasants up the hill, with orders to loosen as many of the detached blocks of granite as they were able to do during the night, and to hurl them down on the enemy at a preconcerted signal, which was to be *three blasts* on his bugle, should they attempt the pass.

The reversion of his little band he drew up in a strong position at the head of the lake, and having completed his arrangements, he took one or two of his most confidential

warriors, and ascending a small eminence on the opposite side of the lake, watched the success of his plans. All night his friends laboured with unabated vigour, and in silence, so that, by the aid of levers and crowbars, at earliest dawn, he was delighted with a view of the formidable reception they had prepared for his enemies. And his eye kindled with pleasure at sight of the huge fragments, like the ruins of a wall, extending along the face of the hill for almost half a mile in length, and his men on the alert, and waiting for the signal. A glance down the lake showed him the English army in full march up the defile : a body of choice cavalry led the van, a division of heavy-armed hillmen followed to support them, and the face of the hill was covered with a cloud of archers to protect their flanks. Onwards they came in single files : the leading horsemen had nearly reached the fatal " Step," when, hark ! a prolonged note from the bugle awakens the mountain echoes, and arouses the slumbering wild-boar from his leafy bed. Hark ! again it is followed by another blast, louder and shriller than the first. Again it sounds, deep, loud, and portentous, like the first note of the coming tempest, as it hurtles through the sky !

A moment before this, the hill lay smiling in all the soft repose of a summer morning, and in another instant it seemed to have been rent asunder by the surge of a volcano, and its entrails tossed in shapeless masses into the dell beneath. Down, down ! the dreadful avalanche descends, leaping and bounding, and tearing up, and breaking down everything that obstructs its fatal progress ; but woe to the predestined wretches that were penned up for slaughter in the pathway beneath. In vain were their screams for mercy, where no mercy would be shown them. Let us not spin out a tale of horror, nor gloat over the wreck of the human race ! The whole of the English vanguard are said to have perished in the defile, and the rest to have become so intimidated, that they retired beyond the Cree, into the county of Wigtown, to await a reinforcement before they resumed offensive operations. (Note to Symson's " Galloway.")

There is also a poetical account of the battle of Glentroot

by one Harvey, where he makes Bruce and Douglas leave Carrick, and

"To Glentrool's thick woody shades repair.
And now from Carlisle on the South'ron coast,
Pembroke, and Vanes and Clifford, lead their host.
Swift to Glentrool the squadrons shape their way,
And fifteen hundred shields reflect the day," &c. &c.

NOTE H.

*"When ye, my trusty Carrick men,
Shall hurl the mountain down the glen!"*

The Bruce, being Earl of Carrick, was of course of great influence in that district of Ayrshire, and was held in more esteem in Carrick than probably in any other part of Scotland. He could not have had very many Gallovidians with him at Glentrool, as doubtless the majority at all events were friends of John of Lorn, and of McDowall, so it is natural to suppose the monarch would place greater trust in the men who hailed from his own province than in any others.

NOTE I.

*"Reproach 'twould be upon our name,
Did we not greet the gallant Vane
With martial pomp and pride!"*

I am unable to give a satisfactory account of this Vane, but he was no doubt a baron, or knight of Cumberland, where the family of Vane still exists in the person of Sir Henry Vane, of Hutton in the forest, near Penrith. He is mentioned more than once by Archdeacon Barbour, but his name does not appear in the list of the slain, or of the prisoners taken at Bannockburn, where Clifford was killed.

NOTE J.

*"They'll hear resounding overhead,
The slogan's deadly yell."*

The slogan was a wild dirge played upon the bagpipes, as either a lament, or as an incentive to battle.

NOTE K.

*"Where will the bloody gift beguile
Our good King Edward's hours of pain,
And prove that traitors strive in vain."*

Just about the time of, or rather more probably a few days after, the defeat of Pembroke at Glentrool, King Edward I. died at Burgh-on-the-sands, a village on the shores of the Solway, whither he insisted on being taken from Carlisle, though so sick and in such pain that he was unable to travel more than six miles in four days. He had suffered great pain during his sojourn at Carlisle; but persuading himself that the virulence of his disease was abated, he was so anxious to proceed in person at once against Bruce in Galloway, that he offered up in the Cathedral at Carlisle, the horse-litter on which he had previously been carried, and started for Scotland on his war-horse. On the 7th of July, 1307, he breathed his last, and probably the encounter of Glentrool was fought much about that very date. King Edward's last request was that his body might be reduced to a skeleton, by a process described by Edward himself, and that it should be borne at the head of his armies against the Scotch, there to remain without burial until that land was entirely conquered.

NOTE L.

*"His fate a lesson grim shall be,
O'er Carlisle gate for all to see."*

It was Edward's habit to place the heads of all traitors over the gates of towns, and this generally either in London or in the north of England, as a warning to the people. Berwick, Roxburgh, Newcastle, and Carlisle were all favourite places for these ghastly exhibitions.

NOTE M.

*"The horsemen two abreast march on,
Until the 'Steps of Trool' they won."*

For description of the "Steps," see note "G" to this Canto.

NOTES TO INTRODUCTION TO CANTO IV.

NOTE A.

*"We'll dream of Douglas as we leave
The lonely tower of ancient Threave."*

The strength, or tower of Threave, now a remarkably picturesque ruin standing on an island in the river Dee, about three miles from the modern town of Castle Douglas, was once an almost impregnable place; and the entire district teems, as its name points out to this day, with memories of the Douglases.

Not far from the town is a beautiful piece of water called Carlinwark Loch, of about a hundred acres in extent, the surface dotted with very picturesque islands; the most interesting of which goes by the name of the "Fir Island," and on it may to this day be traced the remains of an iron forge, which tradition—often the best historian—assigns to the time of Edward I., about the year 1300, when he penetrated into Galloway, and here the horses of his cavalry were shod; and at times of great drought, a road can be seen which led to this island from the mainland.

The Castle of Threave is in itself a magnificent ruin; and for solitary grandeur and romantic associations, stands second to none in all Scotland. Here dwelt the doughty, and often cruel, Douglasses, and to this fortress they retired when pressed by their enemies. When held by William, the eighth Earl of Douglas, in 1451, as a Royal Castle, it is said that everything about the household was conducted with regal magnificence, a retinue of over one thousand armed men being kept in the castle. Immediately over the principal gateway of Threave Castle may be seen a huge block of granite, which projects from the wall, and which went by the name of the "Gallows Knob," or hanging stone. And in case it could be ever said by Douglas' foes, that this emblem of their great power wanted its "decoration" in the shape of a victim, it is stated by old writers that many an unoffending servant or labourer was swung up on the "Knob," when a prisoner taken in war or foray was not to be got! The Castle consists mainly of a fine square tower, *minus* the roof, surrounded by what must have been a very strong barbican, flanked by four round towers, one at each angle; and it was probably built about the beginning of the fourteenth century, on the supposed site of a fortress belonging to Alan, the last native Prince of Galloway.

The last fortress in Scotland which held out for the Douglasses against King James II., after the great rebellion in 1453, was the Castle of Threave. The monarch determined to reduce it, and for this purpose he set out for Galloway, in person, at the head of a large force. The army took

up its position at a spot known as the "three thorns of Carlinwark," and whilst preparations were made for opening the siege, each of the inhabitants of Kirkcudbright contributed an iron bar for the manufacture of a monster gun, which a blacksmith of the name of "Brawney Kim,"* and his seven sons, had offered to construct for the King, who was only too glad to accept their proposal. The making of this extraordinary piece of ordnance took some time, and was carried on at Buchan's Croft, close to the "three thorns." It was composed of a quantity of separate bars, held together by hoops of iron, after the form of a cask, and its calibre was 19½ inches, and its weight 6½ tons. It was with the greatest difficulty dragged by strong men and horses into a commanding position (since called Knockcannon) opposite the Castle. The charge was one peck of gunpowder, and a stone ball which weighed as much as a "Carsphairn cow."† Such was the celebrated cannon, now known as *Mons Meg*, and which graces the ramparts of Edinburgh Castle. The siege having commenced, the monster gun was fired with such effect, that it became evident that the greatest terror had been caused amongst the people in the Castle. The second shot went right through the massive walls, and carried away the right hand from the arm of the celebrated "Fair maid of Galloway," as she was at table in the large banquet hall, and as her hand was just raising the wine-cup to her lips. This was, of course, regarded by the people as the direct manifestation of the vengeance of God, because that very hand had been given in marriage to two brothers, whilst the lawful wife of one of them was still alive. The large garrison, in a state of terror at such unheard-of artillery, at once surrendered, and so delighted was King James, that he gave the estate of Mollance, hard by, to the blacksmith, after whom (or rather after whose land, as is the custom in Scotland) the monster gun was christened. Its original name was Mollance Meg, contracted in time into Mons Meg.

* Or M'Kim, or M'Min.

† Carsphairn is the most northerly parish of Kirkcudbright.

In the summer of 1841, when some repairs were going on at the Isle of Threave farm, a large stone ball, of a circular form, was found under a heap of rubbish ; and which, besides almost exactly fitting the calibre of "Meg," at Edinburgh, lay in a direct line with the breach in the wall, and with the line of fire from the mound at Knockcannon. Here, then, is a charming authentication of the ancient legend. When Threave Castle was being repaired, to accommodate the French prisoners taken in the Peninsula, early in the present century, one of the workmen discovered a gold ring of very massive workmanship, and inscribed "Margaret de Douglas," and probably was the very ring that was worn on the hand of this fair lady when Mons' ball deprived her of it !

NOTE B.

*"Till Tongueland's bridge is left behind
Where the first Edward's health was drunk
In olden time by prior and monk."*

At Tongueland,* or Tongland, was in ancient times, when the monasteries were scattered far and wide over Scotland, the seat of a priory of friars of the order of Premontr , and were brought here from Cockerland, in Lancashire. This priory was built by Fergus, Lord of Galloway, in the 12th century, and its prior and monks were always—when it suited their interests—very loyal to the English monarch, and especially so when Edward I. visited Galloway. The monks of Dundrennan, however, and of other Galloway priories, obtained large benefits in the shape of grants of land, salmon fisheries, and the like, from Robert the Bruce, after the battle of Bannockburn ; but previous to the peace, the monks were, for the most part, in favour of England.

The well-known old poem, by Dunbar, of the "Feignit Friar of Tongueland," tells of how the then abbot (in James IV.'s reign) was an Italian, and also a chemist and

* See Note A to Introduction to Canto I.

alchemist, and how he said he could fly, which he—in the presence of the King and his courtiers—attempted to do, “flying” from off the lofty battlements of Stirling Castle, having attached to his legs and arms long feathers from all kinds of fowls. The abbot boasted that he would fly to France, where he would arrive before the ambassadors who were then leaving Stirling. It is needless to say that the rash abbot broke his thigh by the fall, and sank deep down into a dunghill, where he was covered with filth, as his name ever after was with disgrace !

NOTE C.

*“ Past old Kirkcudbright’s ivied tower,
I’ll leave thee in thy favourite bower,
And bid thee rest, with grateful smile,
In sweet Saint Mary’s lovely isle.”*

Saint Mary’s Isle, the seat of the Earls of Selkirk, lies about a mile to the southward of the town of Kirkcudbright ; and is, in reality, a peninsula, and not an island, being joined to the mainland by a narrow neck of land : it was, indeed, at no very distant period completely surrounded by water.

It is a most beautiful spot, the house being embosomed in lovely green woods, the gardens almost touching the sea-shore ; while the screams of the herons in their nests overhead, the cries of the curlews, gulls, and sea-fowl, take one’s thoughts away to the wildness of nature, at the same time the great beauty of the park and woodland walks would almost make one believe one was walking in a peaceful English policy. The principal interest attaching to Saint Mary’s Isle (so called from its ancient priory dedicated to that saint), lies in the legend of Paul Jones, the celebrated privateer, who, in the year 1778, landed on the island with the intention of carrying off the Earl of Selkirk, who fortunately was absent in England. Disappointed in his quest, in order to satisfy his men that they

had not landed for nothing, he told them to demand from the Countess, who was at home, what silver plate they could obtain. Lady Selkirk delivered up all the plate that was in the house, and it was conveyed to Paul Jones's vessel, that lay in the offing. Mr. Benjamin Franklin, who was at that time on a commission to try to get the European Powers to acknowledge the independence of the United States, demanded the plate from Jones, and sent it back to Lord Selkirk with an apology.

John Paul was the man's real name, and he was a son of the gardener at Arbigland, and was sent to school at Kirkcudbright, where there is a tradition that he had maltreated some other boy, and was brought before the magistrates, who advised his being flogged. He then ran away to sea, quickly became a master of a vessel, and on his way to Tobago, was unfortunate enough to murder his mate. For fear of being hung, he concealed himself at Tobago, and eventually reappeared as a privateersman on the Scottish coast.

I am indebted to the present Earl of Selkirk for the above account, which is the correct story, many erroneous accounts having been published at various times. Lord Selkirk informs me that, when the plate was sent back, the tea-leaves were still in the teapot !

NOTE D.

*" When, slowly, with expiring ray,
Amidst the Kells the sinking sun
Its shadows o'er the mountains flung."*

The range of lofty hills, known as the " Kell's range," embraces some of the most picturesque mountains in the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright, the best view of them being obtainable from Carsphairn village, where sometimes the sunset effects are most beautiful. The principal hills forming the Kells range are Corserine, the Carline's Cairn, Meaul, Millfire, Milldown, Little Millyea, Meikle Millyea, and Portmark Hill, the whole making a splendid range of rugged mountains, averaging from 2,000 feet to 2,670 feet in height.

NOTE E.

"There Cairnsmore still gigantic stands."

This alludes to the lofty mountain known as Cairnsmore, of Carsphairn, on the Knockgray property ; and which is the highest of the three mountains bearing the same name in the county of Kirkcudbright. It is 2,612 feet in height, while Cairnsmore of Fleet is 2,331 feet, and Cairnsmore of Dee only 1,616 feet high. There exists a very ancient doggerel rhyme with reference to the three Cairnsmores :—

"There's Cairnsmore of Fleet,
An' there's Cairnsmore of Dee ;
But Cairnsmore of Carsphairn
Is the highest o' a' three."

NOTE F.

*"The famous 'Black Craig o' the Dee'
That guards its stream beneath."*

This most picturesque mountain is also called Cairnsmore of Dee, and is the same hill alluded to in the previous note as being the smallest of the three hills. It is covered with heather almost to its summit, where I have often found the most beautiful crystals, and it is said agates also exist.

NOTE G.

*"And past Dalshangan and Dundough
Spreads softly out in fairer view
The lovely vale of Ken."*

The valley of the Ken, generally known as the district of the Glenkens, is one of the most beautiful parts of the South of Scotland. The Glenkens are formed of four large parishes, namely, Carsphairn, Kells, Dalry, and New Galloway, and some of the most pleasing, as well as the most romantic and historically interesting scenery, is here to be found. The

ancient castle of Dundough, situated below the hill of same name on the banks of the river Deugh, is now in ruins but was once a stronghold of the Gordons, a branch of family of Kenmure, and one of the owners was the deer ranger, under the Earl of Cassilis, of the forest of Buch of which the hill of Dundough, or Dundouch, formed a part. It is romantically built close to the water.

NOTE H.

*"Then climb we now grey Bennan's side,
And view a panorama wide."*

Bennan is a mountain, the lower slopes of which are beautifully clothed with birches and fir, and which rises above the loch of Ken, not far north of New Galloway station, whence a very pretty and extensive panoramic view obtained.

NOTE I.

*"On Lowran's braes one fondly dreams
Of young Lord Lochinvar."*

Sir Walter's Scott's familiar lines scarcely need repeating for they are "household words" wherever the Scotch language is spoken, and Lady Heron's song in "Marmion" is well known, viz. :—

*"O, young Lochinvar is come out of the nest,
Through all the wide border his steed was the best;
And save his good broadsword he weapons had none,
He rode all unarm'd, and he rode all alone.
So faithful in love, and so dauntless in war,
There never was knight like the young Lochinvar!"*

Lochinvar is a lake of some three miles in circumference and is about six miles distant from loch Ken. It belongs to the Gordons of Lochinvar, nearly related to the Gordons of Kenmure. On a lonely isle in the loch was once an old castle.

NOTE J.

*“ When grim Black Douglas scoured the plain,
And Edward Bruce, his charger’s rein
Check’d by yon rocky height,
And as he scann’d the country o’er
His royal brother Edward swore
Should o’er this lovely district reign,
When Scotland won her own again.”*

The famous grim Lord Douglas, who always went by the *sobriquet* of the “Black” Douglas, owing to the swarthy hue of his complexion, was doubtless very often in Galloway. One of his greatest feats was the daring and gallant capture of the strong castle of Roxburgh. It was on a shrove-night, when most of the Roman Catholic garrison of the castle were keeping high holiday, but their watches were as usual on the ramparts, as it was known that Douglas was in the vicinity. The wife of one of the English officers was sitting upon the battlements that night, with her little child in her arms, and whilst she was looking out over the country she happened to observe in the fields below the castle, several small black figures, like a herd of cattle, but apparently approaching the foot of the wall. She called the sentinel’s attention to the fact, but he merely observed, “Pooh ! pooh ! it’s only farmer such-a-one’s cattle : the good man is keeping a jolly shrove-tide, and has forgot to shut up his bullocks in their yard ; but if the Douglas come across them before morning, he is likely to rue his negligence.” But these creeping objects that they had seen were no cattle, but Douglas and his soldiers, who had covered their armour with black clothes, and were creeping on all fours, with scaling ladders, under cover of the darkness, to the castle walls. The poor lady knew nothing of this danger, so began to sing to the infant, and to tell it of the Douglas, for, when English children were naughty, their mothers and nurses were used to tell them that the Black

Douglas would carry them off. So the soldier's wife sang :—

“ Hush ye, hush ye, little pet ye,
Hush ye, hush ye, do not fret ye !
The Black Douglas shall not get ye ! ”

“ You are not so sure of that,” said a voice close beside her ; and she felt at the same time a heavy iron glove laid on her shoulder, and when she looked round, she saw the very Black Douglas she had been singing about, a tall, swarthy, strong man. At the same time another Scotsman was seen ascending the walls, near to the sentinel. The soldier gave the alarm, and rushed at the Scotsman, whose name was Simon Ledehouse, with his lance ; but Simon parried the stroke, and closing with the sentinel struck him a deadly blow with his dagger. The rest of the Scots followed up the ladders, and the castle was taken. Many of the soldiers were put to death, but Douglas spared and protected the woman and child. She probably made no more songs about the Black Douglas ! (“Tales of a Grandfather.”)

After Robert Bruce's victory over the Earl of Buchan, near Inverary, his brother Edward gained a very decisive victory over John de St. John and Ingram de Umphaville, and a large party of English at Craignell, near the Dee, in Galloway. The engagement was a very bloody one, Edward gaining a complete victory, and pursuing the Southrons in every direction. (Kerr's “History of Scotland.”) During the pursuit, Edward reached the summit of the range of mountains which divides the Ken from the Dee, when so delighted was he with the beauty of the scene, that he declared to those around him, “That beautiful country must be mine.” This wish was literally fulfilled, on Robert Bruce making his brother Edward Lord of Carrick and Galloway. The spot became famous, and a large cairn, or heap, of stones was raised upon it, which still goes by the name of Cairn Edward.

NOTES TO CANTO IV.

NOTE A.

*"And Kenmure's castle proudly stood
As guardian o'er the neighbouring wood,
All peaceful on a rising mound."*

The ancient castle of Kenmure, as it stands at this moment on the beautiful banks of Loch Ken, is not the same building which existed at the period of the present poem. The castle which now exists is finely placed upon a lofty mound close to the head of the lake: this mound appears to be of very old date, and possesses a moat. It may have possibly been a stronghold of the aboriginal inhabitants, before the castle was erected, but in any case, a finer site could hardly have been chosen by its builders. It is not known by whom it was built, although the Hon. Mrs. Bellamy-Gordon, the present proprietor, has written to inform me that it is *said* to have been built by the ancient lords of Galloway, and that it was undoubtedly once the home of the Lady Devorgilla (who married John Baliol, the father of the John Baliol that Robert Bruce fought with), who was born at Kenmure. The said John Baliol himself, tradition affirms, was also born there. The Lady Devorgilla built New Abbey, or Sweetheart Abbey, near Dumfries, also the "old bridge" of Dumfries, and endowed Baliol College at Oxford. It appears not very easy to trace the origin of the Gordons, but Mrs. Bellamy-Gordon tells me, "The Gordons came originally from Berwickshire, and got their estates in Galloway in 1297, but did not live there till Charles I.'s time." The old castle passed through many stirring times, having been burnt in Mary's reign, and

again by Cromwell's soldiers, and in the rebellion of 1715, William, the sixth Viscount, was beheaded on Tower Hill, forfeiting the estates.

Viscount Kenmure was very conspicuous as a Loyalist in this great civil war, where he held command of a party of horse, and it was "looked upon as not the worst point of his military character, or rather discipline, that he constantly carried a large cask of brandy at the head of the corps for the use of his men ; which cask, says an old historian, was well known to the whole army by the merry appellation of Kenmure's drum." (Chambers' "Picture of Scotland," vol. i. p. 266.)

The older of the two castles, that is the one probably standing during Bruce's time, was built close to the loch, about a mile to the southward of the present castle, and upon the same bank (the western).

NOTE B.

"Of Douglas, Kenmure's latest lord."

As far as I can ascertain, from inquiry and by diligent research into all the ancient histories that relate to the subject, it seems very probable that James, Lord of Douglas, possessed the Castle of Kenmure at that time, at all events, which immediately preceded the battle of Bannockburn. There is no doubt, in any case, that the Douglasses once possessed this castle, and as a grant of land in Galloway was given to Lord James Douglas by Robert Bruce, it was not surprising to me when I found, in two separate old volumes, the statement that Douglas was lord of Kenmure at the beginning of the fourteenth century.

NOTE C.

*" Right proudly Scotland's banner waved
Upon the Castle keep,
Its folds of silver gaily braved
The wintry blast that round it raved."*

The Royal Banner of Scotland, in Bruce's reign, was, of course, the silver cross of Saint Andrew, upon a blue ground, which blue and white cross can now be seen blended in the familiar "Union Jack."

NOTE D.

*" And Edward, gay by festal board,
As brave in field with lance and sword,
O'er Galloway and Carrick lord."*

Edward Bruce, whose intrepidity and valour had made his very name a terror to his enemies, performed numerous feats of valour in Galloway. It is stated by Archdeacon Barbour (p. 186) that this prince took in the course of one single year, no less than thirteen castles, or "strengths," in Galloway, which completely reduced that part of Scotland under his brother's dominion. His great gallantry, amounting often to rashness, is the theme of admiration in Barbour's work over and over again. As a reward for his gallant services, Robert created him Lord of Galloway and Carrick.

NOTE E.

*" Oh! wearily sails the sad wee bark
As wearily as she may,
For she bears on board a Scottish lord,
As she sails to the west away."*

The story of Robert Bruce and the spider is well known, but I feel it necessary to reproduce it again in this place, as a poem, having the hero as its title, would scarcely be com-

plete without the legend. During the winter of 1305-06, Bruce, with some few of those who were still faithful to the cause of liberty, passed some months in the lonely Isle of Rathlin, or Rachrin, about five miles from the mainland of County Antrim, on the northern coast of Ireland. On this island, now the property of Mr. Gage, there exist many stories concerning the patriot king, and there is also a considerable ruin, which goes by the name of Bruce's Castle.

One day, during that miserable winter, when his resources appeared almost exhausted, his men disheartened, and when all around seemed black and his prospects wretched, he betook himself to a small shed, and laid his wearied body down upon a handful of straw. His meditations were melancholy, and he thought over his defeats in the field of battle, where he had now been four times decisively beaten. He had almost made up his mind to give up all hope of continuing, against fortune herself as it appeared to him, the glorious struggle for the independence of his beloved country ; and his mind was fixed on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, where he might, in some measure, expiate the murder of the red Comyn, which ever preyed upon his mind. As he thus lay thinking, he chanced to observe a spider which was endeavouring, unsuccessfully, to swing itself on to a lofty beam, where it evidently wished to fix its web. Bruce amused himself for some time by watching the insect, which still persisted in its difficult attempt, after having failed no less than six times. It now occurred to him that he would regulate his own future course on the success or failure of the spider. At the next attempt,—the seventh—the little insect succeeded in its plucky endeavour, and Bruce, leaping off his straw (or more probably heather) pallet, swore to himself that he, too, would try and try again, till he won his lost kingdom, and triumphantly freed his suffering countrymen !

Since that day—more than five hundred and fifty long years ago—it has ever been deemed unfortunate for a person of the name of Bruce to kill a spider ; and, indeed, the superstition has extended to nearly every Scotchman, few of whom would wantonly put to death one of these harmless insects.

NOTE F.

*"As he wakeful lay, a spider grey
Essay'd to climb in vain."*

With regard to the way in which "Bruce's spider" endeavoured to gain a lofty beam, I have been compelled to make use of the word *climb*, which I, of course, only do on account of the rhyme, as a spider cannot be exactly said to climb a beam, but rather to hang by its thread, and to either ascend by its means to the desired point, or to swing itself backwards and forwards until it gains its object. I have received an obliging communication on this subject, from my friend, the Rev. O. Pickard Cambridge, of Bloxworth, Dorset, than whom probably no living naturalist has had better opportunities of studying the habits of spiders, and I feel certain few scientific men know more about these insects. Mr. Cambridge writes as follows:—"I observe," he says, "in your 'Ballad of the Spider,' that you speak of the insect as endeavouring to *climb* the wall, and falling to the ground, after the manner, I suppose, of a wasp on a window pane! Of course, the gist of the anecdote lies in the success of the spider after its repeated failures, and therefore a criticism of the exact method of the insect might be thought hypercritical. I have, however, always thought that the spider in question, hung by its thread, was trying to swing itself to a distant point, in order to fix the main-line of its snare, which would be in accordance with a spider's habits, whereas no spider would be detained a moment in endeavouring to climb to the roof or ceiling by the wall. For, if the surface were too smooth for immediate adhesion of the *tarsi*, a spider has the means immediately at hand to gum it over with an adhesive silk, and so form its own ladder as it goes. I have seen a spider ascending a window pane in this way.

"When in Scotland, some years ago, I made many inquiries about Robert Bruce and the spider, but, of course, could not arrive at anything definite with respect to its

species; but all accounts I heard were to the effect that it was trying to *swing itself* from one point to another. The only published account I can lay my hands upon just now is in one of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge volumes, which details it in the way I have mentioned. I have, under these circumstances, always set Bruce's spider down as one of the *Eperciride*, and most probably *Meta Meriana Scopoli*, which is abundant in dark places, and in old or ruinous buildings all over Scotland, and whose habit is to spin a snare on a foundation line frequently fixed in the manner above detailed."

NOTE G.

*"'Neath Craigencallie wind their way,
Where on the hill the sunbeams play,
And cairns of warriors meet their sight,
And mark the scene of Raploch fight."*

The peasantry in the immediate vicinity of Loch Dee, Loch Trool, and the wilder parts of the northern Galloway mountain region, were, for the most part, friendly to the cause of Bruce and freedom; and one of the most ancient and interesting of the traditions relating to the love of the humblest in Scotland for their patriot monarch is the story of the Battle of Craigencallie, or, as it is also called, Moss Raploch. Good old Andrew Symson, in his "Description of Galloway," which, though written more than two hundred years ago, is the most reliable of local histories I know of, gives the account of the battle in quaint language, as follows. He states that King Robert the Bruce, "being by a part of the English army defeated in Carrick, fled into the head of Lochdie, to a few of his broken partie, and lodging in a widow's house, in Craigencallie, in the morning she, observing some of his princely ornaments, suspected him to be a person of eminence, and modestly asked him in the morning if he was her Leidge Lord. He told her Yes, and

was come to pay her a visit ; and asked her if she had any sons to serve him in his distress. Her answer was that she had three sons to three severall husbands ; and that, if she was confirmed in the truth of his being her sovereign, they should be at his service. He askt her farther, if she could give him anything to eat. Her answer was that there was little in the house, but a grist meal and goats' milk, which should be prepared for him ; and while it was making ready her three sons did appear, all lusty men. The King asked them if they wou'd chearfully engage in his service, which they willingly assented to ; and when the King had done eating, he asked them what weapons they had, and if they could use them ; they told him they were used to none but bow and arrow. So the King went out to see what was become of his followers, all being beat from him but 300 men, who had lodged that night in a neighbouring glen, he asked them if they could make use of their bows. McKie, the eldest son, let fly an arrow at two ravens, perching upon the pinnacle of a rock above the house, and shot them through both their heads. At which the King smiled, saying, I would not wish he aimed at him. Murdoch, the second son, let fly at one upon the wing, and shot him through the body, but M'Lurg, the third son, had not so good success."

Another account says :—The appointed place of meeting was a farmhouse (supposed to have been Craigencallie), which the King boldly entered ; the mistress of it, a generous and high-spirited woman, was sitting alone, and upon seeing a stranger enter she inquired his name and his business. The King replied that he was a traveller proceeding through the country. "All travellers," said the good woman, "are welcome for the sake of one !"

"And who is that one ?" asked Robert.

"It is our own lawful sovereign, King Robert the Bruce," replied she, "who is Lord of this country, and though his foes have now the ascendancy, yet I hope soon to see him Lord and King over all Scotland !"

"Dame, do you really love him so sincerely ?" asked the King.

"Yes," she answered, "as God is my witness!"

"Then, it is Robert Bruce who now addresses you."

"Ah! Sir," said she in much surprise. "Where are your men, and why are you thus alone?"

"I have none near me at this time," replied the King, "therefore I must travel alone."

"This must not be the case," observed the dame, "for I have three sons, gallant and faithful, and who shall be your trusty servants."

They were absent at the moment, but on their return, she made them all promise fidelity to the King. [The rest of this version then proceeds as that just quoted.]

"In the meantime the English, upon the pursuit of King Robert, were encamped in Moss Raploch, a great flow* on the other side of Dee. The King observing them, makes the young men understand that his forces were much inferior, upon which they advised the King to a stratagem, that they would gather all the horses, wild and tame, in the neighbourhood, with all the goats that cou'd be found, and let them be surrounded and kept all in a body by his soldiers, in the afternoon of the day, which was accordingly done. The neighing of the horses, with the horns of the goats, made the English at so great a distance apprehend them to be a great army, so durst not venture out of their camp that night. And by the break of day the King, with his small army, attacked them with such fury that they fled precipitately, a great number being killed; and there is a very big stone in the centre of the flow, which is called the King's Stone to this day, to which he lean'd his back while his men gathered up the spoil; [and within these thirty years (about 1,600), there were broken swords and heads of picks got in the flow, as they were digging out peats.]

"The three young men followed close to him in all his wars to the English in which he was so successful, that at last they were all turned out of the kingdom, and marches† established

* This "flow" is a bog in the parish of Kells, close to the Dee.

† *i.e.* boundaries.

'twixt the two nations; and the soldiers and officers who followed him were put into possession of what lands were in the English hands, according to their merite. The three brothers, who had stuck close to the King's interest, and followed him thro' all dangers, being askt by the King what reward they expected? answered very modestly, that they never had a prospect of great things; but if his Majesty would bestow upon them the thirty-pound land of the Hassock and Comlodan, they would be very thankful; to which the King cheerfully assented, and they kept it long in possession." It is generally supposed that the fight at Raploch was commenced *before* the English army was aware of the presence of the *corps d'armée* of horses, sheep, and goats, which the three brothers drove up to the summit of the hill of Craigen-callie, where they blew horns and trumpets, and beat drums, when the enemy, in whose faces (say some of the old accounts) the sun was shining, with blinding brightness, thinking a large reserve was coming up to the attack, turned and fled.

The late Mr. Train, who was an excise officer at Newton-Stewart, and a zealous antiquary, and a friend and valued correspondent of Sir Walter Scott, interested himself to ascertain the truth as to these royal grants of land to the widow's three sons. Their descendants undoubtedly possessed the lands for some centuries. Mr. Train says, however:—"There are no lands called *Hassock* in the grant made by the King. The oral tradition of the country is, that Annabel, the widow, solicited and received the '*bit hassock*' of land that lies between the burn of Palnure and the burn of Penkill. This *hassock* of land is an isosceles triangle, the base of which runs for three miles along the Cree, and the sides formed by the streams of Palnure and Penkill, run five miles into the country."

Murdoch, according to Symson, had that part of the grant which contained the farm of Risk, about two miles and a half from Newton-Stewart; McKie had the Larg, near Kirrourtree; while M'Lurg was given, for his share, Machermore, about one mile below Newton-Stewart. This speck of land has been the birthplace or the residence of

perhaps, more distinguished individuals than any rural district of a similar small extent in Scotland. Macmillan, founder of that sect that bears his name, was born at Barncachla. Murdoch, the last of the descendants of old Annabel, who was settled in Kirrourtree, was famed over Europe as a botanist. Dr. William M'Gill, minister of Ayr, whose celebrated essay on our Saviour's death caused such a controversy at the close of the last century, was educated at Minnigaff school. Professor Alexander Murray, the well-known oriental scholar, was born at Cowar. Patrick Heron, whose banking scheme ruined so many gentlemen in the south and west of Scotland, lived at Kirrourtree, where Burns often was a welcome guest. General Sir William Stewart, who saw much service in the Peninsular war, possessed Comlodan, all within the King's grant to Annabel.

In the flat stone which stands to this day in the middle of the flow at Raploch, there is a hole, where it is said the royal standard was planted during the battle. The hill and farm of Craigencallie are now the property of my friend Mr. James Drew, who writes to me that in his opinion, "the configuration of the country near Craigencallie is in keeping with the description of the battle given by tradition, and the remains of the walls of an old cottage are still pointed out as 'the Bruce's wa'as,' the small park (or field) in which this cottage formerly stood being known by the name of 'The Bruce's Park.'"

A very similar *ruse* was used, in after years, by Bruce at the great battle of Bannockburn, which may be said to have almost decided that battle, and the idea of which was possibly taken from Craigencallie fight.

NOTE H.

*"Though Scottish shafts, like sheets of hail,
Are beating on their coats of mail,
Though loudly sounds the Gall'way flail."*

One of the most effective weapons, as one of the most dreaded, appears in the days of Bruce, and for many years

subsequently, to have been the famous "Galloway flail." Harry the minstrel, popularly known as "Blind Harry," the author of "The Wallace," describes this weapon in his poem as being peculiar to Galloway ; and evidently, by the opinions of other old authorities, little known elsewhere. A good specimen was, a few years since, in existence in a museum in Edinburgh, the "staff" of which was some five feet in length, and made of stout but very pliable wood, while its "souple" (*i.e.* the loose top) was from three and a half to four foot long, jointed with heavy iron rings in several places, to enable the man who used the weapon to "double" it about an enemy's shoulders with resistless force.

NOTE I.

"And shake the Shiltrum's treble rank."

The military formation, or evolution, whichever it may have been, and which is so often alluded to in the pages of Barbour's "Bruce" and of Blind Harry's "Wallace," seems to have been a complete puzzle to most historians, and none of them have, so far as I know, attempted to describe it. At the battle of Stirling, and again at disastrous Flodden Field, the Shiltrum was used, and with the worst results to the Scotch, who seem to have been proud of this formation, but only as a last resource in cases of dire extremity. The old historian Maitland called it "the fatal ring" at the battle of Flodden ; and Barbour, describing one of Bruce's engagements, says that :—

"Horse and man
Round about the Shiltrum ran."

It thus appears that this formation was a circle, or rather more probably a regular series of concentric circles, somewhat similar to our double rank in the modern "square." The square, of course, can be marched forward, or backward, or in any given direction, whereas the Shiltrum, being a regular

circle, could probably hardly have been able to move at all, but having taken its post, had to conquer or die upon the same piece of ground.

NOTE J.

*"Where sweetly bends its graceful head,
That lovely flower which poets told
On Mount Parnassus grew of old."*

One of the most beautiful of all wild flowers, in boggy mountainous wilds, especially in the north of England and in many parts of Scotland, is the grass of Parnassus (*Parnassia palustris*), which is stated by the ancients to have grown luxuriantly upon the lower slopes of Mount Parnassus, in Greece, and in the bogs around its base. It is a lovely little plant, from eight to ten inches in height, and has solitary creamy-white flowers, delicately veined. The nectaries are fan-like scales, fringed by white hairs, and ending in yellow wax-like glands.

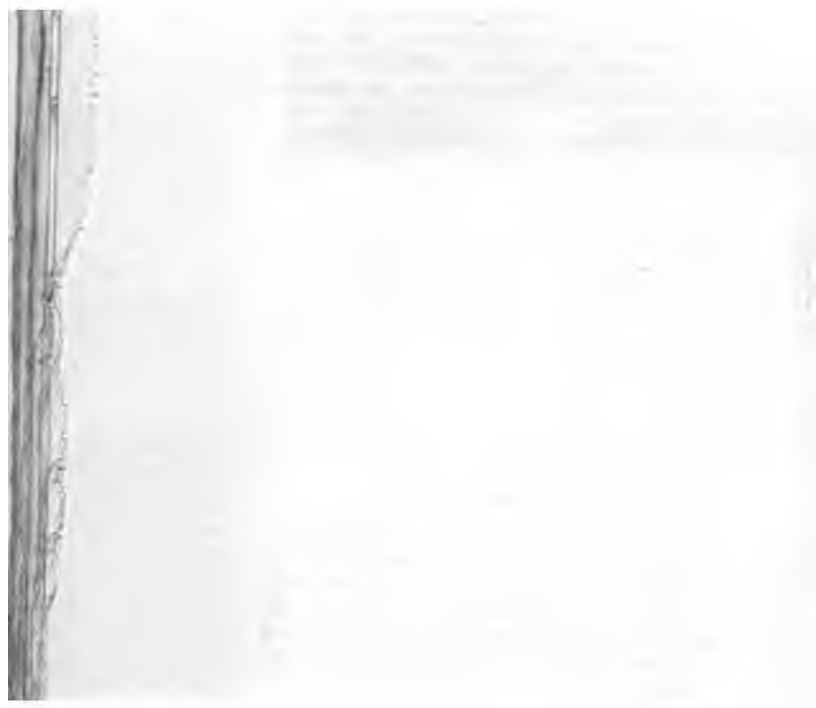
NOTE K.

*"In mellow light before his eyes
Dundrennan's Abbey calmly lies."*

Far-famed Dundrennan Abbey is one of the finest ruins in the south of Scotland, lying in a peaceful glen, through which flows towards the sea, which is but a short distance away, a sparkling stream, and sheltered on north, east, and west by gently sloping hills of greenest grass, on which here and there old gnarled thorn-trees stand. On the south is the Solway shore. The ruins are very romantic in appearance, and are now covered with a pale moss of a light greyish colour, which adds to the picturesqueness of the whole place. The abbey is very ancient, and according to Holinshed ("History of Scotia," 1577), was founded by David I., or at all events in his reign

(A.D. 1124—1153). Chambers, in his "Caledonia," on the other hand, states that Fergus, Lord of Galloway, who was by marriage allied to the throne, emulated royalty in the munificence of his foundations, one of the most remarkable of which was Dundrennan.

There are few finer examples in the whole of Scotland of Gothic architecture than this fine abbey, which was inhabited by Cistercian monks. The monks who lived here were instituted in France by Robert, Abbot of Molesme, in 1098, and were called also *Monachi Albi*, or white monks, because they wore white garments with the exception of their cowl and scapular, which was black, the Benedictines being entirely robed in black. I know not who was abbot in Bruce's time, but, at all events, immediately before Bannockburn, all the clergy with but few exceptions were in his favour, and would have welcomed a visit from their King. Close to the Abbey is Port Mary, whence the unfortunate Queen Mary embarked for England after the disaster at Langside.







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